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Unity and Missions

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Dedication

To my associates on certain interdenominational and international committees; whose combined membership represents thirty communions in fourteen countries; who have no responsibility for the opinions which this book expresses, with some of which they may not agree; but whose fellowship in the work which concerns the world extension of the Kingdom of God is one of the inspirations of my ministry and strengthens my longing for the day when the artificial barriers which now separate many of our churches shall be removed and we shall be one in the visible Church of the Living God even as we are now one in Christ Jesus

Foreword

AMID the solemnities of the closing weeks of the life of our Lord on earth, two desires for His disciples stand preëminent, Unity and Missions. Many other duties were left to be developed from His teachings, but these two were among those that were specifically emphasized. But while His immediate followers were characterized by Unity and Missions, their successors soon lost both. It is significant that with this loss came the decline of spiritual power. Now the followers of Christ are turning again to Unity and Missions. Some experience in missionary administration has convinced me that the two subjects are indissolubly connected. In proportion as the Church becomes missionary, it feels the need of unity, for it is futile to expect a divided Church to evangelize the world.

The question arose at the outset whether controverted questions should be omitted in order to avoid the risk of displeasing any reader. The conclusion was soon reached that this policy would render the book not only inoffensive but useless. The time has passed for platitudes and generalities. The subject cannot be discussed in any practical way without a candid facing of facts, a frank discussion of the value of certain specific proposals that are now pending, and an effort to answer the salient objections that are preventing many earnest Christians from believing in the desirability or the prac-

ticability of union. I dare not cherish the hope that I have succeeded; but the attempt at least has been made, in the reverent conviction that if the will of our Lord is to be done on earth, His disciples must learn to walk and work together in closer fellowship in His Holy Name.

The great European War added startling evidence of this need. Whatever may be said regarding responsibility for the incidents and disputes that immediately preceded and attended the beginning of hostilities, it is now painfully clear that the Archbishop of Canterbury was right when, in a sermon preached in Westminster Abbey, August 2, 1914, he said: "What is happening must be due somewhere, somehow (I am not attempting to judge where or how), to the pride, the high-handedness, the stubbornness of men's temper undoing and thwarting the handiwork and will of God. We have got to set ourselves, slowly it may be, but determinedly as the generations pass, to eradicate and make unendurable the temper among men from which such things spring." Can a divided Church do this? If the impact of real Christianity upon the life of nations had been sufficiently strong, would their people slaughter one another? Nor is there the slightest doubt that the average American is just as belligerent as the average European and would fight as quickly under similar conditions. It is the common characteristic of imperfect humanity that has found such terrible expression in Europe. In these circumstances, the Church is under solemn constraint to make the spirit of Jesus more thoroughly pervade all human life and relationships, to clarify the distinction between the teachings of Christ and so-called modern civilization, to eliminate the pagan and selfish elements in our social, commercial and

national life, to convince men that brotherhood under the Divine Fatherhood is not only personal but international, and to exalt Christ as the only Lord and Saviour of mankind. It is because I firmly believe that the time has come when this task should be undertaken by a united Church that this book has been written.

A. J. B.

156 Fifth Avenue,
New York.

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A PRAYER OF JOHN HALES, WHO DIED IN 1656

Look down, O Lord, upon Thy poor dismembered Church, rent and torn with discord and even ready to sink. We will hope, O Lord, that notwithstanding all supposed impossibilities, Thou wilt one day in mercy look down upon Thy Sion, and grant a gracious interview of friends so long divided. Thou that wroughtest that great reconciliation between God and man, is Thine arm waxen shorter? Was it possible to reconcile God to man? To reconcile man to man, is it impossible? Direct Thy Church, O Lord, in all her petition for peace. Teach her wherein her peace consists, and warn her from the world, and bring her home to Thee; that all those that love Thy peace may at last have the reward of the sons of peace, and reign with Thee in Thy kingdom of peace forever. Amen.

A PRAYER FROM THE JACOBITE LITURGY OF ST. DIONYSIUS

O God our Father, good beyond all that is good, fair beyond all that is fair, in Whom is calmness and peace; do Thou make up the dissensions which divide us from each other, and bring us back into a unity of love, which may bear some likeness to Thy sublime nature. Grant that we may be spiritually one, as well in ourselves as in each other, through that peace of thine which maketh all things peaceful, and through the grace, mercy and tenderness of thine only Son. Amen.

I

THE BREAKING OF PRIMITIVE UNITY

"THAT they may all be one" was a part of our Lord's supreme prayer for His disciples. The solemnity of the circumstances in which that prayer was offered, almost under the shadow of the cross, as well as the scope and majesty of the prayer itself, warrant us in believing that it expressed the deepest yearning of the Son of Man for those whom He was about to leave "in the world." One might have supposed that whatever divisions existed before would have been healed at once and that throughout all subsequent times the tenderness of that appeal would have stilled the voice of discord and led all true followers of our Lord to seek unity of faith and love. If we concede that such unity was too much to expect immediately of a human nature which, though regenerated, was not yet fully sanctified, we must at least recognize that the prayer of Jesus indicates a goal which believers in all ages and lands should steadfastly endeavour to attain. When we rise above the turmoil of mortal infirmity and ecclesiastical strife to the spiritual altitude where our Saviour dwelt when He poured out His heart to the Father of us all, we cannot but feel that the Church in later days has not fulfilled the desire of her Lord in this respect, whatever may have been her obedience to His will in other directions.

The Christians of the Apostolic Age and of the period which immediately succeeded it appear indeed to have enjoyed a considerable degree of unity. It is true that there were differences among them, which in some instances degenerated into contentions that elicited sharp reprimands from the Apostle Paul. These differences, however, did not develop into organic separations. The circumstances of the age compelled a certain degree of unity. Few in number, poor in this world's goods, ostracized by the world, and persecuted by the government, they were pressed together by the necessities of their situation. These necessities, too, tended to concentrate their minds upon the more essential elements of Christian belief and practice and to limit that opportunity for speculation in which ecclesiastical and theological differences thrive.

There is, moreover, a difference of opinion among scholars as to whether the early Church was organized in a form which would have permitted the development of denominations. It is probable that the first organizations were of the simplest kind. Simplicity was natural during the infancy of the Church; but however well adapted to that period, it is not necessarily adapted to the conditions of the modern Church. The fact that Christ and His apostles did not set up a highly organized system is not a reason why we should not have one. Jesus was a faithful member of the Jewish Church of His day, loyally observing its requirements and worshipping in its Temple. He sought to reform abuses in the established Church; but He did not separate from it until the Jews rejected Him and drove His disciples out of it. When later developments forced them to band themselves together as a separate Church,

they of course began with the rudiments of organization.

Unfortunately, when the early Christians became conscious of the need of a more compact organization, when prosperity, freedom from persecution, numbers and leisure afforded opportunity for discussion, the differences of interpretation and method which had at first been more or less latent developed into wider separations. Then a few masterful men, imbued with the spirit of that monarchical age when all the world still believed in the divine right of kings, gained an ascendancy which in time crystallized into the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. The Church thereupon passed into an era of enforced external unity so rigid in type and so authoritatively maintained that the conditions of the Apostolic Age were reversed. That is to say, instead of little bodies of individual disciples assembling for worship in one another's houses and under the simplest forms, the Church now became a religious absolutism with a leadership so characterized by the love of power and pomp that the form crushed the spirit.

When the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries broke the power of this external organization in northern Europe and emancipated Christianity from the thraldom of the Roman hierarchy, the new-found liberty began to manifest itself in various ways which, while undoubtedly beneficent in many respects, were far from ideal in others. This, too, was natural and perhaps inevitable in the circumstances. Only men of the most forceful character and intense convictions would have had the boldness and determination to fight for their mental and spiritual freedom

against all the powers of the world secular and ecclesiastical, and the very qualities which enabled them to win the victory limited to some degree their ability to use it wisely. Liberated captives, whether physical, mental or religious, are not apt to make a moderate use of their hard-won freedom until time and experience have softened the asperities of conflict. Men who had thrown off the yoke of Rome not only had to organize themselves but they were forced to wage unceasing warfare for more than a century against their still powerful foe. The period during which Christianity was engaged in this life and death struggle with an arrogant hierarchy was not conducive to the development of the spirit of unity.

The era of theological polemics to which the Reformation gave birth was equally unfavourable to such a spirit. The great doctrines which had emerged during the struggle had to be formulated amid many warring definitions, and this in itself was a task which called for a concentration of mind and involved a sharpness of disputation that left neither time nor disposition for anything so irenic as unity. All the intolerance and love of power were not left in the Roman Church. The Reformers, great as they were, were men of very human passions, else they probably would not have been Reformers; while in England, the masterful King Henry the Eighth placed himself at the head of the Anglican Church and put his own favourites in positions of authority. It is not surprising, therefore, that the centuries which immediately followed the Reformation were characterized by vehement controversies which quickly hardened into sects.

It was not until our own generation that conditions

became favourable to an effort to heal these divisions and to seek that unity for which our Lord prayed. The Church is now emerging from the period of controversy in which the essential doctrines of Christianity were freed from error and given form. We are far from imagining that this work has been completed. Indeed, the years through which we are passing are characterized by many theological readjustments. Some venerable confessional statements are being quietly dropped out of sight, others are being restated, and certain long latent truths are rising into commanding prominence. This process of readjustment and restatement is a sign of vigour and not of decay. It is true that it is marked by some vagaries of thought. But on the whole, it cannot be doubted that the Church at large has a fuller knowledge of God, a better understanding of the mind of Christ, and a more adequate conception of Christian duty than it ever had before. Let us hope that growth of this kind will not cease. It certainly ought not to cease until the full measure of divine truth has been attained.

Nevertheless, it is clear that we are passing out of the period in which the theological issues which separate us from one another and even from Rome are of supreme importance. There are, indeed, sincere Christians who are survivals of the former era of sectarian polemics. I shall not soon forget the kindly professor of theology who held that Calvinism was the only possible expression of Scriptural truth and who sorrowfully viewed Arminianism as the first step on the downward path to atheism. Many Christians, however, have now been thrown into such relations with practical Christian work at home and abroad that they

have been led to realize that a new era of Christian activity has dawned and that it imperatively demands a new alignment of forces, that denominations which have been facing one another must now form a line which faces the world. Perhaps they deserve no special credit for seeing so clearly what needs to be done. They are simply placed where the necessity is too patent to be ignored.

We do not overlook the fact that most of the present divisions originated in differences in theological conception and biblical interpretation and that the denominations arose for the purpose of giving adequate emphasis to specific doctrines which had not been brought into due prominence by existing churches. We shall attempt to show, however, that the occasion for denominational separations on this account has largely passed; that theological and interpretive differences, within evangelical limits, do not call for independence of organization; that, as a matter of fact, no one of the great denominations to-day is characterized by doctrinal uniformity; and that true unity is entirely compatible with reasonable variations of opinion. This will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.

II

THE PRESENT UNFORTUNATE SITUATION

THE present situation is certainly an unfortunate one. The reports of the Government Census Bureau show that, apart from the Roman Catholic and Jewish Churches, there are no less than one hundred and sixty-four denominations in the United States. Some of these are so small, represent such idiosyncrasies of faith or practice, and are of such limited influence that they may be deemed almost negligible in a broad survey. Making all due allowance, however, for these scattered fragments, the general fact remains that American Christianity is divided into many denominations and that some of them are divided and subdivided beyond all possibility of justification. There are twelve different kinds of Presbyterians in the United States, fifteen kinds of Baptists, sixteen kinds of Methodists and twenty-one kinds of Lutherans. Even the peaceable Quakers are divided into four bodies. The "Churches of the Living God," in spite of their solemn title, are split into three separate communions; and the climax is reached by one denomination which, Dr. Henry van Dyke informs us, is divided into two sects by the preference of one branch for hooks and eyes instead of buttons in the attachment of clothing. They piously hope to meet in heaven, but they will not unite on earth. To attribute such schisms to providential guidance is to come perilously near to blasphemy.

The jealousies and rivalries which formerly characterized the relations of the denominations are happily subsiding, and in many places have almost wholly disappeared. But the unhappy consequences still remain. Denominations overlap one another. Organizations are needlessly multiplied. Expenses of maintenance are enormously increased. Small communities which could be adequately served by one church have half a dozen or more.

An investigation of a district in Missouri disclosed the fact that most of the communities are over-churched. There is an average of one church for every two hundred and forty people. The over-churching is especially bad in the small towns and villages. Farber with three hundred people, four churches and no resident minister, Middletown with three hundred people, six church organizations and no resident minister, Loddonia with six hundred people and seven churches, Clarksville with eight hundred people and five churches, Bellflower, a new town, with five hundred people and five churches, Silex with three hundred people and four churches, Olney with one hundred people and four churches, are classic examples of the wastefulness of our modern church policies in this region.

Substantially similar conditions exist in many other states. An Ohio village of four hundred and seventy-five people with five churches is cited by the same authority as typical in that state. An Oregon town of five thousand people has thirteen churches. An Illinois town of fifteen hundred people has nine churches, and half of the men do not belong to any church. A Pennsylvania city of eight thousand population has three Presbyterian churches, three United Presbyterian,

three Methodist, two Episcopalian and one Disciples, besides Roman Catholic churches. A Vermont town has thirteen churches for the thirty-five hundred people who live within four miles of the post-office. And so one might go on indefinitely.

If several such churches would unite, they would form a congregation strong enough to exert a commanding influence in a community. Separately, they have small and poorly equipped buildings, and the time and money and activity of their members are so largely occupied in the struggle for existence that little or nothing is done to advance the cause of Christ except to maintain occasional services for the little groups of local people who attend them.

A survey of twenty-one counties in Ohio showed that eighty-three per cent. of all the country churches had less than one hundred members each, that twenty-one per cent. had only twenty-five members or less, and that ninety per cent. had absentee ministers or none at all. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. reports six thousand seven hundred and fifty-one churches in towns of twenty-five hundred population or less. Only thirty-three and eight-tenths per cent. have the full time of a minister, twenty-three and four-tenths per cent. have one-half of his time, ten and four-tenths per cent. have one-third, and four and five-tenths per cent. one-fourth.

Students of this subject tell us that the size of membership of a church has been found to have a bearing upon growth. A study was made in the year 1913 of one thousand five hundred and fifteen country and village churches in nineteen counties in Ohio. Of these churches, slightly less than one-third were found to be

growing, while the rest were either standing still or losing ground. Of churches with a membership of twenty-five or less, two per cent. were growing; of churches with a membership of twenty-six to fifty, seventeen per cent. were growing; of fifty-one to one hundred, thirty-four per cent.; of one hundred and one to one hundred and fifty, forty-eight per cent.; of one hundred and fifty-one to two hundred, fifty-nine per cent.; of two hundred or over, seventy-nine per cent. In the United States as a whole it is estimated that only forty-three per cent. of the rural churches are growing, while eighteen per cent. are stationary, and thirty-nine per cent. are losing.

The report from which most of these facts have been taken very sensibly concludes: "In order that more people may be brought into the Kingdom, our smaller churches need to combine or federate." [1]

I write feelingly, for I have experienced some of the consequences of sectarian effort. On my ordination, the ecclesiastical body to which I was subject asked me to take charge of a church in a certain western town of thirty-five hundred inhabitants. Half of the population was composed of foreigners who had their own churches, Lutheran and Roman Catholic. For the remaining seventeen or eighteen hundred people, there had been four churches—Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal and Methodist. The pastor of the Methodist church had been deposed for stealing books. Thirty-five of the members of his congregation believed him to be innocent and, withdrawing from the Methodist communion, set up an independent church under his

[1] Report of the Agent of the Department of Churches and Country Life of The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.

leadership. A zealous superintendent of Presbyterian Home Missions deemed this a favourable chance to gain a foothold for Presbyterianism, and he induced the thirty-five aggrieved ex-Methodists to organize as a Presbyterian Church, the historic difference between Arminian and Calvinistic theology troubling him and them not a whit. The deposed Methodist minister soon left, and I was sent to succeed him. I was introduced to a congregation worshipping in a rented building, its only possessions being a wheezy reed organ and a few second-hand hymn books. The people were to pay me four hundred dollars a year and the Board of Home Missions in New York six hundred dollars more. The warm enthusiasms with which I had entered the ministry were somewhat chilled as I realized that my opportunity to preach the Gospel had been created by an unsavoury dispute in an already over-churched community. However, I went to work with the best grace that I could command. Presently, the pastor of the Congregational church began to advocate views which some of his flock deemed heretical and the dissatisfied families turned to the Presbyterian services in such numbers that our place of worship was crowded. The town was not growing, and I concluded that building up a church by taking advantage of the troubles of other churches was not exactly what I had gone into the ministry for, so that when a call came to a field where there was real need, I accepted it. The congregation succeeded in securing another minister; but when he left three years later, the church peacefully died. There were no mourners, for it had become clear to every one that the church never should have been born.

If this experience were exceptional, I should not presume to put it in print; but it is typical of thousands of others. The alleged providential opening is not, indeed, usually made by an ecclesiastical trial for stealing books; but whatever the cause, the result is the same—more churches than can be justified by the reasonable needs of communities, not a few of them having originated in squabbles over the choir, or something that the pastor did or did not do, or social jealousies among the women, or the domination of an aggressive layman. Other churches have been started because an owner of real estate desired to exploit a new neighbourhood, or because denominational leaders had an ambition to see their particular communion presented in as many centres as possible.

When a pastor of a small church appealed to me to help him raise money among my parishioners, saying that the organization of another denominational church had drawn away some of his supporters so that current expenses could no longer be met without outside help, I went to the clergyman who had effected the new organization and, in the intimacy of personal friendship, queried: "Alfred, what on earth led you to plant another church in that small and already well-supplied community? Now I've got to put outside money into our church there or see its minister leave for want of a proper living." He replied in a jovial tone which conveyed serious intent: "Arthur, I tell you that every community in this state which doesn't have one of our churches is going to have one if I can bring it about, no matter whether it has other churches or not." Happily this spirit is not so common as it was twenty-five years ago when this incident occurred. The mischief of it is

that the churches that were organized in those days are still with us, denominational zeal and unflagging effort having managed to stave off the obsequies which attended the demise of my first congregation.

Of course all small churches cannot be indiscriminately classified in this way. The largest congregations were once small. Some great churches in established centres ought to send off occasional colonies for growing suburbs; and there are developing regions where new churches ought to be planted as soon as possible. If any one wishes to make out a technical case for the present multiplication of churches, he can cite many such instances. So can I. But the general conditions are too notorious to be successfully denied.

We hear much about the religious destitution of various parts of America; but the destitution is seldom caused by the lack of accessible churches. Rather it is due to the fact that churches, as now organized, are too weak to do the extension work that is required. If there is a community of a thousand souls anywhere in the country, which does not have at least one church within practicable reach, it is so exceptional that no generalization can be fairly based upon it. The average town in the West not only has all the churches that it needs but more, and the unchurched regions are, as a rule, the most sparsely populated ones.

Conditions in the eastern states are little if any better, as we have already seen. A New York or Philadelphia minister or layman visiting the West is prone to indulge in severe criticism of the unnecessary number of churches, forgetting that his own church stands on an avenue lined with half-filled churches, while his own state is thickly dotted with towns as badly over-

stocked with churches as any in the West. Yet he blames the new West for not having solved a problem which the older East has conspicuously failed to solve. The New Jersey village near which I am writing these pages during a summer vacation has seven churches for seventeen hundred people, and it is not peculiar in this respect. The older sections of our country are quite as much responsible as the younger ones for the evils of sectarianism, evils which grow out of and are inseparable from the divided condition of Protestantism.

One of the pressing problems of Christian statesmanship is not so much the planting of more churches as the consolidation and better distribution of existing ones. Every inadequately churched community in America could be amply provided for by transferring to it some of the ministers and money from the thousands of over-churched communities, and the latter would be benefited rather than harmed by the transfer.

Ministers' salaries should also be taken into account. When four or five pastors have to be paid where one or two should suffice, no one receives a living support. Nothing else so eats out a minister's heart as constant worry about bread and butter for his family. The average salary of ministers in America is reported by the United States Census Bureau to be six hundred and thirty-six dollars. This is but little more than the average wages of blacksmiths which are five hundred and thirty-seven dollars, while stablemen's average is six hundred and eighty-nine dollars, pumpmen's six hundred and eighty-five dollars, and carpenters' six hundred and three dollars. Organic union would double the ministerial average. What would become

of those who would not be needed in their former communities? Every efficient man could be used in supplying fields which are now neglected or undermanned because there are no funds to supply them, and enough others would be set free to enable the missionary boards to triple their force of ordained men.

The minister of the large church is usually a more efficient man than the minister of a small church, not necessarily because he is abler or more devoted, but because he is better supported, commands more facilities, and has less financial anxiety. More than ten thousand ministers in the United States are compelled to make bricks without straw. Such a man is unable to buy the books and periodicals that would enrich and enlarge his mind; he is distracted by responsibilities for the Sunday-school and the finances of the church because there are not competent laymen in the congregation; he is obliged to conduct every service, attend every funeral, call on every stranger, sick person and family, write every letter and sermon by hand, adjust every personal difficulty, and go without any suitable vacation because the little church cannot afford to employ an assistant or even one of the deaconesses or other lay workers who are sent out for such service by a number of training schools for Christian workers; and all the time he is worried almost to nervous prostration by a distressing effort to make ends meet in his family expenses. His wife does all the housework even to the washing and ironing, and in addition is president of the Ladies' Aid Society, adviser of the poor, welcomer of the newcomer, comforter of the sorrowing, soother of the sensitive, manager of socials and other church functions, and, in general, assistant at large of her over-

taxed husband. No layman would think of carrying on a business concern of the size of an average church without several clerks; but the pastor has to do it. The typical clergyman makes as many calls as a physician, prepares as much literary matter as an editor, does as much executive work as a merchant; and all without any paid assistance whatever. The marvel is that he succeeds as well as he does. Laymen are fond of joking about the poor business judgment of ministers. If ministers did not have superior business capacity, their families would starve. No other class of men can make a dollar go farther or maintain a respectable appearance on such limited means. If the layman were to attempt to keep his business going amid the difficulties in which his minister manages to keep his church going, he would come to grief in six months. Doubling that minister's support and giving him reasonable equipment would quadruple his efficiency.

There are incompetent clergymen, just as there are incompetent lawyers, physicians, teachers and merchants. But as a rule, the secret of inefficiency in a church does not lie in the minister but in the sectarian system which denies him proper facilities by increasing his burdens and decreasing his resources, stunting his intellectual growth and frequently compelling him to earn money in other ways in order to educate his children. Is it any wonder that so many ministers are restless and dissatisfied; that when a really good pulpit becomes vacant, there are a hundred applicants for it, the number not indicating too many ministers but a host of them in fields that offer insufficient opportunity and support; that ecclesiastical bodies lament that a

diminishing proportion of educated young men are willing to study for holy orders; and that the difficulty of supporting educated ministers in rural parishes has become so great that men of inferior training are being pressed into service in large numbers. The Rev. F. C. Wells, in a study of rural parishes in New England, ascertained "that only forty per cent. of the pastors were college graduates, twenty-five per cent. had theological training, and seventy-five per cent. seemed to be lacking in efficiency from inadequate educational equipment." Dr. W. H. Wilson found in a survey of country fields in Indiana that "seventy-two per cent. had no theological training, fifty-seven per cent. lacked college education, and thirty-seven per cent. had not even high school training."

Nor are the disastrous effects confined to the clergy. What shall be said of the cheapening of religion in the estimation of the world and of the young people in Christian families when Christianity is identified in their minds with the kind of half-starved churches which the present policy necessitates in myriads of communities?

An unfair slight is often put upon the ministry of small and over-churched communities. The foreign missionary is regarded as a hero and saint, and justly; but the home missionary and rural pastor are too often regarded as inferior men who could not succeed in other fields. That they do not equal a Brooks or a Spurgeon may be frankly admitted; neither does the average city pastor. Nor can we view without deep concern the proportion of comparatively uneducated men in many rural districts. But taking the pastors of small churches as a class, they are earnest, devoted

men who are doing faithful work amid conditions of peculiar difficulty. Consider a typical case.

Here is a young man of fair ability and promise who has given his heart to God. He might go into some secular calling, live in the place of his choice, earn a comfortable living, and make some provision for old age. But he sees his country's need of the Gospel. He feels with Paul, "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel!" He enters college. Like most of those who seek the ministry, he is poor, and the denominational board or the college scholarship available for students for the ministry can give him less than half the cost of an education. By strict economy, rising early, retiring late, and earning money while his classmates are playing ball, he manages to finish his course and to stand on the threshold of the ministry. The prospect from a worldly view-point is not inviting. Some young men run no worldly risk in entering the ministry; for however modest they may be, they cannot but know that reasonably attractive places will be within their reach. But this young man realizes that he is never likely to be called to an important pulpit with a large salary. He is an average man, he must expect to labour in an average field, and he is told that a field of this kind yields only the barest living wage. And yet he knows that he is needed, that there are hundreds of churches that must be served by average men or not served at all. He marries a young woman of education and culture; and together they go to a half-dead village church or to a pioneer work where no foundations have been laid. They do their duty and do it nobly and uncomplainingly, but against heavy odds.

I knew the wife of such a minister to say to her hus-

band: "John, I really don't know what we shall do for clothes for the children. I've stitched and mended and darned till they are covered with patches, and I am just ashamed to have them go anywhere, they look so ragged." And the tears were in her eyes in spite of brave effort to restrain them. "Cheer up, Mary," answered John. "The check from the Board of Missions will certainly be here to-day, and then we will fix them all up comfortably, and you too!" Then he put on his hat and walked briskly to the post-office. He came back with slower steps and drooping head. Mary looked up inquiringly, and he falteringly handed her a letter informing him that scanty receipts and the difficulty of maintaining so many churches had compelled the Board to cut down his appropriation ten per cent., and that the first payment would be sent as soon as the treasury would permit. What did they do? Winter coming, and not enough money for clothing, for fuel, for food. God knows what ministers' families do in such circumstances. It is a mystery that I have never been able to fathom. There are heartaches and sleepless nights in such homes. But husbands and wives struggle on year after year, giving their lives to unselfish, exhausting labour for God and man, and patiently enduring for the Church that which enables them to know, as many others do not, the meaning of the stanza:

> "For her my tears shall fall,
> For her my prayers ascend;
> To her my cares and toils be given,
> Till toils and cares shall end."

At last he breaks down. His salary stops. He could hardly live when he was at work, to say nothing

of saving. Want comes to the door and stalks in. The wife grows pale and thin. The denomination which he has so self-sacrificingly served grants him from its relief fund two or possibly three hundred dollars a year, but "with so many to aid, it can do no more."

No, I am not drawing on my imagination. Twelve years of my ministry were spent in Wisconsin, Oregon and Illinois churches which brought me into contact with large numbers of home missionaries and underpaid pastors of small churches in both city and country, and since then I have been engaged in work which has given me opportunity to see similar conditions in other states. I have been in the homes of many ministers of small churches, have counselled with them and preached in their churches. I can say of them what the Duke of Wellington said when he heard the Irish troops maligned in the British Parliament: "Hold, I have seen them do their duty!" For three years I was chairman of a committee that had charge of the local distribution of a relief fund in northern Illinois. The cases of destitution that I found were pitiful, worn-out soldiers of the Cross and gray-haired widows living in bitter poverty while waiting for the chariot to bear them away to their Father's House!

Such hardships would not be necessary if there were proper rearrangements or consolidations of denominations. Meantime, there are no men in all Christendom who feel more keenly the evils of over-churching and are more anxious to abate them than the ministers in small churches. They realize the consequences for they have to bear them.

I have heard it argued that several small churches

" will do more work " than one large church. Every time I have heard that statement, I have queried: " What work ? " I have never yet had an answer that would stand analysis. Four churches in a community that affords an adequate field for only one of course mean more local offices to be filled, more bills for fuel, lights, sextons and music, and more " work " to raise money to pay them. But is that the kind of work that the Church is set to do in the world ? It must be done, of course ; but is it all that should be done or even the major part of it ? As a matter of fact, it is about all that is done by thousands of small churches. Their energies are so largely absorbed by the effort to keep themselves from dying that they do practically nothing outside. One is reminded of the rare bird which had been kept alive with difficulty in a zoölogical garden, which to the delight of its keepers finally laid an egg, and which, when the chick was hatched, promptly ate it. No one doubts that small churches produce eggs. The difficulty is that they eat so many of them that few are left for others. Such self-consuming congregations are not doing the chief work for which the Church exists. It is true that some small churches are evangelistic forces and give liberally to missions in proportion to their resources. It is also true that some large churches are spiritually unproductive. But such cases are exceptional ; and when they are found, the explanation usually lies, not in size, but in the personnel of pastors or laymen. Other things being equal, as they usually are, five hundred believers can exert a greater power for Christ by acting as one body than by acting as several separate bodies.

If a young man from a small village church goes to a

big city church, he often becomes a good worker. There was real work to be done in the community from which he came, but he did not do it because he needed the emancipation from narrow parochial problems, the wider visions and the larger inspirations of a great congregation. One reason why the average church does not make a heavier impact upon the moral and social conditions of its community is because it has to struggle so hard to live that it becomes self-centred; its gaze is turned inward and it has neither time nor money for anything else. The consequence is that when anything else is to be done, the laymen of half a dozen churches have to get together to do it. There are probably a thousand villages in America where several small churches, with their several ministers, sextons, choirs, and poor equipment, could be consolidated into one strong congregation which would halve the cost of maintenance and double the efficiency of operation, a congregation which could hold its young people, liberate money and energy for active Christian work, and be able to see something besides its own local needs.

That denominationalism has achieved some good results no intelligent man will deny. We shall recur to this in a later chapter. But the toll on the other side is heavy. President W. H. P. Faunce, of Brown University, enumerates among the grievous results of denominationalism a constant duplication of effort and a steady waste of power through ruinous competition, loss of perspective, and the magnifying of non-essentials. "Two churches standing side by side in the same village instinctively are compelled to justify their separate existence by emphasizing the things in which they do

not agree. The Baptist puts in his church a stained window representing baptism by immersion, though he is well aware that immersion is the least important article in his creed. The Episcopalian makes much of holy days and ritual order, though he knows that these are not the essence of his faith. The loss of corporate consciousness and so of influential utterance is another serious consequence of our divisions. The Church is not sufficiently heard because it cannot speak with one voice. The problem before us, as some one has said, is how totally unrelated fractions can express themselves with the force of an integer. Under the circumstances, much of the moral passion of our time necessarily flows through channels outside the Church. One of the ablest physicians in this country, a church member of thirty years, recently said to me, with sadness in his eyes and voice: 'My family have concluded that really to influence the life around us we must spend our main strength in other ways. We come to church on Sunday morning to pay our respects to a venerable institution, but for effective action we now look elsewhere.' This is the opinion of thousands of the finest Christian men and women in America, including many teachers of our youth. Reluctantly we record the fact, but to deny it would be to hide one's head in the sand. The Church must recover its outside saints. It must decline to keep up the motions of a formal piety, and must speak to the best brain and heart of our time in commanding voice, uttering a great unifying message and summoning to a great unifying task." [1]

[1] Article in *The Christian Work and Evangelist*, November 1, 1913.

III

CONDITIONS IN OTHER LANDS

I HAVE written in the preceding chapter of America with whose conditions I am most familiar; but several visits to Great Britain have given me the impression that substantially the same conditions prevail there. One hundred and eighty-three denominations are listed. If it be deemed presumptuous for an American to discuss them, let the spokesman be the Rev. Alfred Thomas, M. A., Vicar of St. Barnabas, Newcastle-on-Tyne. In a paper read at the Fifty-third Annual Conference of the Evangelical Union of the Diocese of Carlisle, October, 1913, he said: "Competing denominations within crowded areas are at their wits' end to maintain their existence, and have to resort to undignified if not positively wrong means of raising money. We speak of struggling churches in towns and villages. In many cases this struggle is worthy of our deepest sympathy and most practical aid. But in as many others it is merely a matter of keeping alive a competitive denomination which has lost its grip on the age. The number of existing sects, the majority of whom are united on the fundamentals and distinguished by such slender differences, is one of the chief reasons why thousands heed not the Church's call to reconcilation with Christ and service for Christ. Union is strength, disunion is weakness."

In Asia and Africa, a situation is developing which calls for grave consideration. When the Church awoke to a consciousness of its obligation to give the Gospel to the non-Christian world and to send out missionaries, denominationalism began to be extended to the foreign field. The home churches at first took it for granted that their missionaries would do this. Each communion had no other thought than that the churches which its representatives established should be identical with itself. The missionary boards, having been constituted by the churches, or by members of them acting through voluntary organizations, were naturally influenced by the sentiment of the communions which had created them and which supported them. The missionary, without any special thought on the subject, worked along these lines as a matter of course. Having been trained in a denominational church at home, being accustomed to its type of organization and forms of worship, and never having had occasion to study those of other communions, he naturally organized churches on the only model he knew. Each board, too, chose its foreign field without consultation with the other boards, sending its missionaries to those parts of the non-Christian world to which it felt itself providentially called by some special opportunity or the interest awakened by some individual. Such men as William Carey, Alexander Duff, Robert Morrison, Adoniram Judson, David Livingstone, Ion Keith-Falconer, and John G. Paton, although in some instances located by the home boards, aroused an interest in their respective fields which concentrated special attention upon them.

And so it came to pass that denominational churches were founded in various parts of the non-Christian world

and that most of the sectarian divisions of Europe and America were reproduced on the mission field. There was much devoted labour, but no coördination of effort, no unity of movement. Missionary work was in the period described in the book of Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Here and there an individual missionary abroad or a board secretary at home urged the wisdom of a different method; but he was a voice in the wilderness, and he was fortunate if his fellow-workers did not make him feel that he was uttering heretical opinions.

No great harm resulted during the early period of missionary work. Until three or four decades ago, missionaries were relatively so few in number and so widely scattered, their work was so small and the field so vast, that there was ample room for all without overlapping. Indeed, some missionaries spent their entire lives without ever seeing those of a different communion, except on occasional furloughs in the home land.

With the growth of the work, missionaries and churches began to come into touch with one another. To-day, the contacts in many fields are so close as to raise a real problem of adjustment. It is true that extensive and populous areas are still unoccupied by any church and that other territories are occupied only in part. One or two missionaries for a quarter of a million people do not constitute occupation in any proper sense of the term. Few if any cities in all the non-Christian world have enough missionaries. On the other hand, some cities have a disproportionate share of the missionary force from the view-point of an equitable distribution of the present force and the use of it to the best advantage. Eleven hundred and seventy-eight foreign

missionaries are not nearly enough for Japan; but as long as there are only that approximate number, surely three hundred and twenty-three of them ought not to be concentrated in the city of Tokyo even though it is the largest city in Asia. Three hundred and twenty missionaries do not give an adequate foreign staff for Shanghai; but with only five thousand one hundred and seventy-one, including wives, for the more than four hundred millions of people in China, Shanghai has more than its share. Nor are these solitary instances. Sixty per cent. of the missionaries in Japan are in eight cities. Of three hundred and thirteen missionaries in the Province of Che-kiang, one hundred and twenty-six are in Ning-po and Hang-chou; and of fifty-two hundred missionaries in India, one hundred and one are in Madras and one hundred and thirty-seven in Calcutta. The India Year Book reports that a survey of two-thirds of India shows that of twenty thousand eight hundred and eighty-five Christian workers, native and foreign, sixteen thousand nine hundred and forty-eight are grouped in provinces containing fifty-five million five hundred and eight thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight people. That is, four-fifths of the workers in the region surveyed are among one-fourth of the population. In some sections there is one worker for fewer than five thousand people, and in other sections there is one for sixty thousand.

We should bear in mind that missionaries in metropolitan centres are engaged in more than local station work. The banking, shipping, publishing and higher educational work for many interior stations is usually done in such cities, and some missionaries must devote themselves to these general duties. Joint occupation

by several boards is justifiable in such circumstances. But while allowance should be made for this consideration, the mind is not set wholly at ease by it.

There are now three hundred and seventy-seven boards and societies of foreign missions operating in the non-Christian world. They maintain about twenty-five thousand foreign missionaries and expend in a single year over thirty million dollars in addition to eight million contributed on the field. The growing interest in the evangelization of the world is enabling many of the boards to make substantial annual additions to their missionary force and expenditure. Facilities for intercommunication are rapidly increasing in non-Christian lands, and steamships and railways are bringing once isolated communities into closer contact. The consequence is that missionaries touch one another to-day as they did not in former years, that most of the large cities of the non-Christian world are now occupied by several communions, and that increasing care has to be exercised to prevent duplication of effort. There are forty-one American and Canadian boards carrying on missionary work in China, eighteen British, and fourteen Continental—seventy-three in all. In Japan there are thirty-six American and Canadian boards, seven British, and two Continental—forty-five in all. In India there are thirty-nine American and Canadian boards, six Australasian, thirty-seven British, and ten Continental —ninety-two in all.

We must also take into consideration that this is an era not only of international but of interdenominational relationships. Steam and electricity have brought churches together as well as states. When the Pacific coast was three months' journey from the Atlantic

coast, the average eastern man knew little and cared less about the men of the West. Now that the two coasts are only four days apart, that residents of both are constantly passing back and forth and a common life has developed, the spirit of sectionalism has necessarily diminished. The same conditions are affecting the churches. Baptists and Methodists can no longer live separate lives. Their buildings stand on the same street and their members mingle every day in business and social relations.

A new spirit of fellowship is abroad. There is a closer understanding of the work which the Church has to do in the world, a deeper sense of responsibility for its performance, a clearer recognition that it is not being effectively done and that it cannot be effectively done by so many different bodies acting independently of one another. Closer affiliation is therefore imperatively demanded.

This demand at first manifested itself in undenominational agencies. Men felt that certain tasks called for united effort, and as the way was not clear to unite through their churches, they united outside of them. And so the Bible Societies, the Tract Societies, the Young Men's Christian Association and kindred organizations were developed. More recently, emphasis has been laid on interdenominational efforts, and we now have large coöperative movements of various kinds. We shall recur in another chapter to the bearing of these organizations upon the problem of union. Suffice it here to emphasize the fact that the Christian consciousness of the present day insists upon a more effective use of energy than existing denominational divisions permit, that the sectarian jealousies of former

generations have been materially weakened, and that a member of one communion is ready to call the member of another communion his brother and to work with him for the advancement of the common cause of Christ, irrespective of denominational differences.

Foreign missionary work in particular has emphasized this need, and has been marked by strong manifestations of the new spirit. There is a growing conviction that the task of evangelizing the non-Christian world is so enormous and that it calls for such expenditures of men and money and such statesmanship of administration that it will never be accomplished until the Church addresses itself to the problem in a united way. This conviction has found notable expression in recent years, as we shall have occasion to note more fully in later pages.

The charge that missionaries are animated by sectarian spirit and that Asiatics are perplexed by the denominational divisions of the West has been greatly exaggerated. There is far less sectarianism among foreign missionaries than there is among the home clergy. While there is some truth in the charge that Asiatics are perplexed by western denominational lines, it should be remembered that they are familiar with sects themselves, as their own religions are split into many subdivisions. It sounds formidable to say that there are thirteen denominations of Christians in Japan; but there are no less than fifty-seven sects of Buddhism in that country. Mohammedanism has been rent asunder for centuries by sectarian strife which has engendered the bitterest enmities. Hinduism presents a distracting number and variety of schisms. When, therefore, Christianity goes to Asia under sev-

eral different forms, the Asiatic sees not so much that is unfamiliar as we might imagine.

It cannot be denied, however, that different interpretations of the Bible are confusing, and that Christianity has not made anything like the effective impact upon the non-Christian world that it would have made if it had been united. Missionaries are supposed to exemplify better things than Asia had before, and while they can easily defend themselves from the charge of sectarianism as compared with that in Europe and America, they cannot be indifferent to the injury that is done to the cause of Christ in Asia when missionaries in the same city cannot unite in Holy Communion, or recognize the validity of one another's ordination. The time has come, therefore, to study the whole question with a more serious purpose, a broader outlook, and a juster appreciation of the questions that are involved.

IV

ARE DENOMINATIONAL TEACHINGS NOW DISTINCTIVE?

A STUDY of the present situation will reveal the fact that the vital things for which each of the great communions stands are now accepted as truisms by practically all communions. Let us test this by a few examples.

In an age when the Church of Rome claimed that salvation lay only within its pale, that the priest mediated between the worshipper and God, and that the Pope as the Vice-gerent of God held the keys of Heaven and Hell with power to include and exclude whom he would, Presbyterians arose to assert that the Sovereign God alone is the author of salvation, that the believer as the elect of God has immediate access to the throne of grace without the intervention of priest or ceremony, that the Church should be governed by representatives elected by the people, and that the Calvinistic interpretation of these Scriptural truths, and of others which are logically involved in them, should be the creed of the Church. Are these tenets distinctively Presbyterian to-day? Every well informed person knows that the first three are common to all evangelical communions; and if any one imagines that there is agreement among Presbyterians as to what the Calvinistic interpretation really is, he may obtain interesting information by attending almost any

meeting of a Presbytery in New York or Edinburgh. Can a Presbyterian missionary honestly tell the Christians of Asia that his denomination as distinguished from others preëminently stands for the reign of God and His direct relations with man? Is it not a matter of general knowledge that clergymen of all communions preach them and that all churches are governed by representatives elected by the people, whatever may be the differing titles given to them?

In an age of the union of Church and State, when citizenship in the nation gave membership in the Church irrespective of Christian faith and life, when the line between the Church and the world was almost obliterated, and the Church included large numbers of unregenerate persons, Baptists arose to insist that the true Church is composed only of regenerate persons, and that the Church so constituted should be separate from the State and freed from its interference. Splendid has been the witness of the Baptist communion to these great principles. Clarion has been the call of its ministry to the people of God: "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate." Large is the indebtedness of the whole Christian world to this witness bearing. But that battle has been won, and all other communions are enjoying the fruits of the victory. These principles are now no more distinctively Baptist than Methodist or Congregational. It is true that other communions baptize the infant children of believers; but they do not admit them to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper until, after having attained years of discretion, the children have made a personal confession of faith which would secure them prompt admission to any Baptist church in the country.

In an age of ecclesiastical tyranny, when the right of private judgment was denied, when no man was free to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, when a believer at variance with the established Church was in danger of imprisonment and confiscation of property, Congregationalists arose to proclaim intellectual freedom, the inherent right of man to determine for himself how he should worship God and interpret the Scriptures, and the inalienable privilege of every congregation of believers to manage its own affairs without dictation from ecclesiastical hierarchs. Noble has been the testimony of the Congregational Churches to this declaration of religious liberty. Their struggle has laid the whole Christian world under heavy obligation. But their battle, too, has been won, and the results are the heritage of all their sister churches. Every communion is now intellectually free. Every local congregation has an effective voice in the management of its own affairs. A Methodist bishop seldom ventures to send a congregation a minister that it does not want, while an Episcopal Church, in all necessary things, has as much autonomy as a Congregational Church. Bishops and superintendents are elected by the people or their chosen representatives, are amenable to them, and are vested only with those powers and duties which the people desire them to perform in the interest of the common good.

In an age of spiritual deadness and fox-hunting parsons, when the poor did not have the Gospel preached unto them and religion was a matter of ceremonies and outward conformity, Methodists arose to proclaim an evangelical Gospel to the masses, to revive a spiritual faith, to insist that the vital thing in relig-

ion is not the presence of one's name on the roll of a church but a real experience of Christ, and that the affairs of a church may be efficiently administered consistently with liberty of religious belief and freedom of individual action. Immense is the indebtedness of Christianity to the zeal and devotion of the Methodists. But are their original characteristics now distinctive of the Methodist Church to any greater degree than they are of other churches? Name the most successful soul winners of this generation, inquire which communions are manifesting the greatest evangelistic zeal, and you will find yourself in a company which knows no denominational lines.

Does the Anglican Communion present an illustration of the same kind? It has been flippantly said that the Church of England consisted of those who were left after the others had gone out, although the going was not in every case a direct departure. But all the spiritually minded men and women of that age of religious separations did not go out. Some remained in the Church of their fathers to work and pray with redoubled vigour for the purity of its faith and the spirituality of its activities. The Church of England, startled and spurred to new effort by the heavy defections from its membership and becoming responsive to the rising spirit of the age, threw off the abuses that had characterized it and turned itself with new devotion to the real work of the Master. To-day, is any one so blinded by sectarian prejudice as not to respect the mother Church of English-speaking Christianity, which is contributing more than any other single communion to Christian literature and to foreign missionary work, and whose clergy are as active and earnest

as any in the world in self-denying labour among all classes? If the bishops of former centuries had been like the bishops of the Anglican Communion that I have met, I doubt whether some of the denominations ever would have arisen. The Anglican Church to-day preaches the same gospel as other evangelical churches and differs from them in only one particular. The relationship of that question to organic union I shall discuss in another chapter.

The limitations of this book do not permit an enumeration of all the denominations from this view-point. I do not claim that I have adequately summarized the positions of the communions that have been named, or that every denomination can point to valid reasons for its existence. Every one knows that some of the present day sects represent merely church quarrels. This is particularly true of several of the minor sects and of many of the subdivisions and variations of the general types that have been mentioned. But perhaps enough has been said to emphasize the point that the vital things for which each of the great communions historically stood are now the common basis of all communions, so that any former necessity for their separate existence no longer exists, at least to the same degree. "These various denominational forms of the living Church," said Dr. A. A. Hodge, "are all one in their essentials, and differ only in their accidents."[1]

During the recent celebration of a certain historic event in the development of a denomination which I shall not name, a distinguished minister in an eloquent address named "three vital characteristics which belong to this denomination's message for the world."

[1] "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," p. 305.

These he gave as "first, a profound reverence for personality; second, the centrality of those elements in Christianity which can be experienced in the whole soul of man; and third, the reality of divine grace which the redeeming God has ever treasured in Himself available to man from the foundation of the world, yet historical and visual in Christ." He proceeded to declare that "should ——— through infidelity or weak compromise abdicate their position, for which the fathers had stood, then God would simply raise up another and truer generation for the maintenance and propagation of those truths which have been the pronouncement of ——— the world over for the last one hundred years."

I challenge any reader of these pages to identify that communion from this description of its "distinctive" position.

The dangers which the Church has to face to-day are not those of different interpretations inside of the Church, but the dangers that lie outside of it in the world, the flesh and the devil. That the Church of our time is facing new emergencies was frankly admitted by the Rev. Dr. Francis L. Patton, then President of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J., who said in his Centennial Sermon, May 5, 1912: "I am very free to admit that the issues of to-day are different from those of a former generation. . . . The things wherein we agree with our brethren of other Christian communions are more important than those in which we differ. . . . The points which distinguish our theology are not necessarily those of greatest controversial importance at the present day. Intrinsically they are as important as they ever were, but relatively they are of less importance. In other words,

there has been a subsidence of interest in regard to some questions due largely to the emergence of acute controversial interest in other and more fundamental issues. Men are not discussing the question regarding the subjects or the mode of baptism. The day of hot controversy between Calvinists and Arminians has passed. Men are not writing treatises on theories of inspiration. They are not discussing the question of Adamic relationship or of this, that and the other view of the atonement. The reason is not that these questions are of no importance or of little importance—though I think there is far too much indifference to their significance—but to the fact that the thought of the theological world has been occupied in recent years and is still occupied with questions which bear more radically upon the truth and value of historic Christianity."

It is clear that the path to unity does not lead backward to the centuries of separation, does not lie in effort to transplant ourselves to the days of our forefathers and to fight over again the battles which they fought. We shall never get anywhere by reopening old controversies between Christian men. That would only revivify a sectarian spirit that is rapidly dying and ought to be allowed to do so in peace and charity. Let us ungrudgingly say that each of the great historic communions was historically justified in the position that it originally took; that each emphasized truths which imperatively needed to be emphasized; that each was therefore substantially right; and that each has borne magnificent testimony to the truths for which it arose so that the Church universal is infinitely richer than it would have been if the denominations had never

arisen. The Church is largely indebted to the denominations for the rediscovery of precious phases of Scriptural truth which the established churches had lost sight of, so that the content of our Christian faith is more varied and complete. This is a service whose value could not be easily overestimated. Full freedom of religious thought and practice is another priceless result which the polemic warfare of sturdy ancestors achieved for us. It has been truly said that "in America we hardly realize the value of our heritage. That each one of us may utter his inmost religious conviction, may join what church he will, may profess his faith without legal penalty or social ostracism, that no one of us can be compelled to support a church in which he does not believe—that is an inestimable boon, is an asset on the credit side of the whole controversy. . . . Religious liberty is not yet complete in great parts of Europe and Asia. But the spirit of liberty is mightily at work. It is leavening the whole lump of modern life. Never again in civilization can men be burned or chained for utterance of their faith in God. Never again will civilized governments conceive it their function to enforce doctrinal formulas." [1]

But unstinted gratitude for the blessings which the controversies of former generations have brought does not require us to fight over again the battles of the past. In the good providence of God, each communion has now succeeded in so fully indoctrinating common Christianity with its essential message that there is no longer necessity for it to stand apart in order to be loyal to its historic position. Seldom does a sermon

[1] Article in *The Christian Work and Evangelist*, November 1, 1913.

in any church contain anything that would enable a stranger to tell the denomination to which the preacher belongs. Bishop John W. Hamilton, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, says: "The fact is that there is really no difference now as to faith with the dissenting denominations. The real essence of faith, we are all agreed, and the spiritual conception of the Church are uniform." [1] This unity of belief in essential matters was strikingly illustrated when, in the year 1913, the Christian Literature Society of Japan issued "A Message to the Japanese People" in eighteen sections which summarized "The Christian Faith and Life" in such satisfactory terms that it was signed by seven hundred missionaries of various communions.

When a clergyman accepts a call to a pastorate in another communion, he is usually admitted with very little question, the examination being of the most perfunctory character. The Rev. Dr. John H. Jowett was not conscious of any change of conviction when he went from an English Congregational to an American Presbyterian pulpit, nor was the Rev. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman when he went from a New York Methodist Church to a Brooklyn Congregational Church. The American Baptist Church still stands for a mode of baptism and the Protestant Episcopal Church for a mode of ordination which call for a more definite change on the part of clergymen who are transferred to them from other communions; but of the lay membership, one of the most influential Baptist clergymen in the country, the Rev. Dr. W. H. P. Faunce, writes: "The common transfer of members from one church to another, and from one denomination to an-

[1] Address, May 8, 1913.

other, promotes the healthful circulation of the blood in the body ecclesiastic. Such migrations of membership, like the migrations of students among the German universities, is a fructifying force. No church which claims to have the spirit of Christ can consistently refuse to accept members from every other Christian church, and in accepting them it broadens and enriches its own life." [1]

The Lutheran Churches appear to be even more distinct. Theological and ecclesiastical differences here could be more easily adjusted if they were not complicated by national and linguistic differences. Men of continental origin saw so little of other non-Roman communions in their fatherland, were so accustomed to regard Lutheranism and Protestantism as synonymous terms, were bred to a national outlook so different from that of the English, and, on their arrival in America, were so necessarily segregated by a different language, that they probably will keep together for a longer period. It is comparatively easy for men of British ancestry to unite in religion as they were already united in speech and traditions. But the continental immigrant and his descendants naturally formed their own churches. Where such racial and linguistic cleavages exist, more time will be required for amalgamation. But Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Reformed Churches could be organically united at once with no vital change in their present convictions, their historic differences having sunk out of sight. The first three are even now uniting in Canada. English Baptists and a rapidly increasing number of American Baptists have adopted "open communion"

[1] Article in *The Christian Work and Evangelist*, November 1, 1913.

and thus removed the main barrier between them and other Christians; while the Protestant Episcopal Church has officially proposed a plan for organic union with other communions which includes only one distinctive tenet.

I am aware that I am on thin ice and that some may remind me of the old saying: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." But there is some ice on this subject which needs to be broken; and as for the adage, I am quite willing to be called a fool if I can help to break that ice. In the words of Bishop Charles P. Anderson: "Since the Reformation, the Christian religion has been subjected to disintegrating analyses. Men have taken it apart to ascertain what each jewel in the setting was like. Has not the time come to put them together in a beautiful mosaic? Truths are not isolated. They are related. They are one. Modern creeds and articles and confessions may be admitted to be true. If true, they are related. Or rather they are true only when related. It is no discourtesy to any church to suggest that the time has come to abandon this analytical process by which the Church has been disintegrated and to substitute for it a synthetic process by which the churches will be related. Harmonize the values. Synthesize the theologies. Stop fighting these oft-won battles over again. Cease these interminable logomachies. Strive towards that manifestation of visible unity that will bring defeat to none and victory to all. . . . God is my Father; the Church is my Mother; Christian is my name; Catholic is my surname. Do we need any other names? Why go on to add Anglican, Episcopalian, Roman, Protestant, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist, Baptist,

and so on, and so on? These terms are divisive, sectarian, narrow. They shrivel up one's soul. Names stand for realities. The realities of religion are its affirmations, not its protests and its negations. The universal positives of religion are mine. The whole sweep of the Christian doctrine, the whole field of spiritual experience, the whole world of religious values, the whole story of Christian triumph in every age and in every clime, are mine, because I give my whole allegiance to the whole Church, and not to a mere section of it. Will not every Christian man in these days claim the same thing? If, then, every duly baptized man claims to be nothing less than a member of the Catholic Church (a claim that has the sanction of sound theology), why not begin to plan to give outward and visible expression to this inward spiritual reality? Why seek to perpetuate division and segregation, except to thwart the will of God, to feed our own pride and to defeat the power of the Church of Christ? . . . Because the Methodists left us for reasons which do us no credit, are we to go on estimating Methodism at its worst, as if it stood for nothing that would be worth while in the life of the Catholic Church of the future? Because bishop-baiting Covenanters and lordly prelates lost their tempers a long time ago and called each other unspeakable names, are we to go on, now that things have cooled down, as if reconciliation were impossible, and as if Presbyterian theology were wholly foreign to the Catholic faith?" [1]

The denominations had their day and it was, on the whole, a good one. We have seen that they brought into

[1] Charge to the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Chicago, May 12, 1912.

clear relief truths which had been obscured or misunderstood. Their activities, too, were not ill-adapted to an era of narrow opportunities when the lack of world knowledge and of intercommunication limited their outlook. But the work of the denominations as denominations is largely done. Having borne their testimony to their distinctive tenets and succeeded in their effort to secure general adoption of them, they can now unite without prejudice to the doctrines for which they really stand. The age of denominationalism is merging into the age of union in which one splendid Church will bear convincing witness to all essential truths of Holy Scripture and present a united front to an unsaved world. "It is not necessary that we should lose sight of the estimate we have been accustomed to place upon the value of our Church to any community, the value of the doctrines which it represents and the polity by which it seeks to incarnate them in Christian life and institutions. But the time has come to maintain stoutly that that Church best serves itself which serves its Lord most singly, and that a devotion to a denomination which is not dominated at every point by devotion to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ has degenerated into an unworthy ambition."[1] In the noble words of Browning:

> "What is left for us, save in growth
> Of soul, to rise . . .
> From the gift looking to the Giver,
> And from the cistern to the River,
> And from the finite to Infinity,
> And from man's dust to God's Divinity?"

[1] Report of Special Committee on Coöperation with other Churches, Minutes of Presbyterian General Assembly of 1892, p. 95.

V

SOME MISLEADING ASSUMPTIONS

EMPHASIS should be laid upon the statement that unity does not involve compromise of essential truth or weakening of the evangelical message. I have no sympathy with any effort to attain unity by watering down truth or by eliminating any part of it which a rationalist finds troublesome. I know that there are reverent men who are earnestly trying to serve God and their fellow men without recognizing Jesus Christ as Lord. The personal friendship of some of these men is highly prized. But in matters of the Church, the line must be clearly drawn between those who believe in a supernatural religion and those who do not, between those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God and those who regard it as merely a human book, between those who worship Christ as the divine Saviour of the world and those who see in Him only the best man that ever lived. These cleavages are too wide and deep for any possible bridging. I am discussing in this book the unity of those who hold what is popularly termed the evangelical faith, and nothing that is said should be interpreted as implying any disposition to go beyond it. Unity has its limitations. So far from endangering evangelical truth, the union of evangelical Christians would guard it more securely. The imperious question of this age is, not whether one denomination can make out a better case

than another, but whether we have a Gospel that "is the power of God unto salvation." Urgent is the need that all who believe that we have such a Gospel should get together on this new alignment against those who doubt or deny that we have such a message to the world.

Emphasis should be also laid upon the statement that unity does not necessitate the abandonment of any truth. We should not ask any one to surrender what he deems vital. True unity is characterized by inclusion rather than by exclusion. Take, for example, the mode of baptism. Christians have differed for centuries and doubtless always will differ as to whether it is properly administered by sprinkling or by immersion. Uniformity of practice will never be attained, nor will unity if either party insists that the other shall yield. Unity is possible only by recognizing the validity of both modes of baptism and giving to each believer the option of receiving and to each clergyman the option of administering either method that may be preferred. One who believes that the Bible authorizes only immersion need not be asked to submit to sprinkling, nor need a clergyman who holds that view be required to administer the rite by sprinkling. Let him follow his own conviction; but let him not un-church his brother clergyman who with equal sincerity believes the other mode to be a Scriptural one. I have referred elsewhere to the harmonious union of the American Presbyterian and English Baptist Churches in Tsinan-fu, China, on this platform, and also to the fact that there is no longer ground for the fear that one of these methods may bring unregenerate persons into the Church.

The important question "is not what we give up, but what we can give. I have a horror of that kind of unity that would be based on a sort of residuum. I am not attracted by unity on the basis of an irreducible minimum. I do not want to belong to a church of minimums; I want to belong to a church of maximums—maximum beliefs, maximum duties, maximum sacrifices. The church of minimums is incapable of producing martyrdoms. There are things that we can give up; but nobody is asking anybody to give up anything that is of value." [1]

There are, of course, limitations to this line of argument which Bishop Anderson would be among the first to recognize. One of the chief reasons why the people of God are divided into so many sects is because man-made interpretations of Scripture, forms of organization and methods of procedure are exalted as if they were fundamental verities. A union that would include all these artificial idiosyncrasies of faith and practice, and that would not require anybody to give up anything, would be an ecclesiastical museum rather than a Church, a mechanical assembling of unrelatable elements which would be quite as bad as our present divided situation.

When, however, we talk about the duty of adhering to our convictions, are we complacently and egotistically to assume that our particular convictions are final and irrevocable, that the divine Will has spoken only through us and found in us its most perfect expression, that we are like monarchs of the Medes and Persians or infallible popes who admit no mistakes? "I beseech

[1] Bishop Charles P. Anderson, Address at the Men's National Missionary Congress, Chicago, May, 1910.

you by the mercies of God remember it is possible you may be mistaken," said Oliver Cromwell on a historic occasion. Of course we must hold to our convictions. What else have we to hold to? But we may wisely reconsider them and the grounds which led us to form them before we set them up as insurmountable obstacles to union with our brethren. Convictions that prevent us from coöperating with our fellow Christians may have a larger element of misunderstanding and human frailty than we suspect. A vast amount of unregenerate pride and stubbornness passes for "fidelity to the truth."

We shall not get very far on the road to the unity for which Christ prayed until each of us reconsiders upon his knees the points which separate him from his Christian brethren and searchingly asks himself whether it is probable that the Christ who promised to be with His disciples "alway," and the Holy Spirit who was to "guide" them "into all the truth," made a particular group of believers the only recipient of these divine blessings, so that the only way to unite the followers of Christ is for all the others to give up their own ideas and come over to his communion. Probably most of us and on both sides have some thinking and praying to do along these lines. But if we give the phrase "anything that is of value" the large meaning which it ought to have, union certainly should include it. In the words of the Bishop of Bombay: "The ideal of a reunited Christendom is the preservation of everything vital and vitalizing." "The method of reunion," adds the Archbishop of York, "should be not compromise for the sake of peace, but comprehension for the sake of truth."

An idea which seriously complicates the problem of union is illustrated by the kindly and venerable Roman Catholic Bishop Bonomelli of Cremona, Italy. In a letter to The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, in 1910, written at the suggestion of Mr. Silas McBee of New York—a letter pervaded by a fine spirit of Christian fraternity—he expressed his ardent longing for the unity of the people of God, but added: "We Catholics cannot suffer that to come into question which we have declared to be the truth. We should be traitors to our faith. But you, my ever dear brothers, especially you English, you have not the insuperable difficulty which exists for us, because you have not, strictly speaking, adopted any dogmatic definition since your separation. We have the definition behind us, we have the impassable abyss; you have it not. Come over the gulf to us. We will forthwith throw our arms about your neck. We shall all be sons of the same Mother and of the same Father who is in heaven." An Archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church spoke to the same effect, when, in reply to a question as to how unity could be achieved, he said: "It is necessary to be orthodox; we are orthodox, and there is nothing for others to do but to become orthodox also." Anything more charmingly naïve than these two statements it would be difficult to imagine. The hearts of the good bishops yearned for Christian fellowship with their brethren of separated communions; but they simply did not know what union means. They said in effect: We cannot change, but you can; therefore yield to us. Discard all the progress of recent centuries and reunite on a pre-Reformation, mediæval basis. How exquisitely simple!

Let those who have the broadest conceptions of God and the Church submit to those who have the narrowest. Paring a rival's body down to the desired size, and then swallowing it may be a form of union, but hardly a desirable one from the view-point of the swallowed. Some Protestant writers, however, appear to have no other notion of union than that which the Roman and Russian prelates so feelingly described.

A fallacy which underlies many objections to union is that union means mechanical uniformity, a compulsion upon all members of a church to stand on a dead level of thought. This contention that unity is possible only among those who think alike rests on the false assumption that man is not responsible for his belief but must accept one that is imposed upon him from without; that only one interpretation of Holy Scripture is possible so that if a man does not accept that, he should be anathema; and that all doctrines are equally vital so that no variation in emphasis can be tolerated. This is not a Protestant position. That position has never been more nobly stated than by the Westminster Confession of Faith: "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His word or in any way beside it in matters of faith or worship, so that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also." [1]

Better indeed the variety and freedom and initiative of vigorous life than a mechanical or apathetic uni-

[1] Article II, Chapter XX.

formity; but this is not the real alternative. Liberty is not synonymous with chaos. There never has been a Church whose members thought alike. The New Testament presents abundant evidences that there were such wide differences of faith and practice among the early Christians that it required all the authority of the Apostle Paul to prevent schism, while he himself differed with James quite as widely as the Methodist Church of to-day differs from the Congregational. All the power of the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, backed by the terrors of the "secular arm," could not secure uniformity of belief, as racks and thumb-screws and burning pyres sadly testified. Rome employed all her enormous temporal and spiritual powers to secure uniformity and utterly failed. She has a degree of uniformity to-day only in lands where the human mind is most stagnant and spiritual religion most nearly dead. In Europe and North America she is forced to tolerate not only in her laity but in some of her prelates views for which, a few centuries ago, she would have sent them to the stake, while the Modernist Movement is showing that freedom of thought cannot be repressed, even among the Latin races that have been historically most loyal to the Papacy.

In almost every Protestant communion, wide divergencies exist. Freedom of private interpretation, which is one of the fundamental elements of Protestantism, can never again be taken away. It can seldom be said now that a given communion holds to one opinion and another denomination to the contrary view. It is well known that each of the larger communions includes liberals and conservatives, high churchmen and low churchmen, and that each party laments that the other

is " making shipwreck " of the faith. The Presbyterian Church is commonly believed to be more homogeneous in doctrine than most other communions. But he is ignorant indeed who does not know that it has churchmen as high as many Anglicans and as low as many Congregationalists, and that its theologians and biblical critics range all the way from ultra conservatives to radicals. These elements in the Presbyterian Church are much farther apart than the Presbyterian and Methodist communions. Who does not know that there is an equally wide chasm between opposing elements in the Protestant Episcopal Church? But these various parties are in organic church union and expect to remain so. Can a communion consistently demand, as a condition of interdenominational coöperation, a unity of belief which does not exist in its own ranks?

Let us rid ourselves of the idea that union means uniformity, that a Church must be confined to those who think alike in all things. This wrong and nonscriptural conception—this idea that a Church is properly composed only of those who can agree in all things or are personally congenial—has split the followers of Christ into hundreds of sects. The Lambeth Conference of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion, held in London in 1908, finely expressed the true idea of church unity in these words: " We must set before us the Church of Christ as He would have it, one spirit and one body, enriched with all those elements of divine truth which the separated communities of Christiain now emphasize separately, strengthened by the interaction of all the gifts and graces which our divisions now hold asunder, filled with all the fullness of

God. We dare not, in the name of peace, barter away those precious things of which we have been made stewards. Neither can we wish others to be unfaithful to trusts which they hold no less sacred. We must fix our eyes on the Church of the future, which is to be adorned with all the precious things, both theirs and ours. We must constantly desire not compromise, but comprehension, not uniformity, but unity."

The Rev. Dr. A. A. Hodge, after arguing powerfully for the unity of the Church, said that "deviation of organization, unless touched by the spirit of schism, is not detrimental to the Church," . . . and that "it is not by the uniting of types but by the unity of the Spirit, by taking on more of Christ, more of the Spirit, that we will realize more and more the unity of the Church."[1] This sounds well, and if the principle is conceded, it might justify the separate organization of the Quaker and the Sacramentarian, the Independent and the Presbyterian. But, as a matter of fact, no such principle of organization can be practically maintained. Not a hundredth part of those who sympathize with the Quaker emphasis upon life as distinguished from forms and ceremonies are members of the Society of Friends. The rest are scattered through all the churches. The sacramentarian High Churchman cannot hold in line even his own communion but is strongly opposed by a numerous and powerful Low Church Party. American Baptist and Congregational Churches are demanding a more compact organization and giving their national officers larger powers; while Methodists and Presbyterians are curbing the authority of their bishops and presbyteries over the local congregation.

[1] "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," pp. 211–212–214.

The modern denomination simply cannot be kept true to its type. Almost every one of the principal communions to-day includes all the historic types of religious thought and activity. The conditions of present day life are rapidly destroying denominational lines. The writer knows a clergyman whose ancestors were members of the Church of England. His parents at the time of his birth were residing in a Massachusetts village which had only one church, the Congregational. As their religion and good sense were too strong to permit them to stand aloof from the Christian people about them because there was no church of their fathers in the place, they of course entered this Congregational church and had their children baptized in it. When the son was old enough to think seriously of religious matters for himself, the family was residing in another town which had neither an Episcopal nor a Congregational church, but there was a Presbyterian church. The family attended that church, and the youth united with it on confession of faith. When he decided to study for the ministry, he naturally went from that Presbyterian church to a Presbyterian college, from that to a Presbyterian theological seminary, and from that into the Presbyterian ministry; not because he had made any careful comparison of communions, but because the family happened to be in the Presbyterian church when he consciously began the Christian life. This clergyman to-day therefore is of Anglican ancestry, Congregational baptism, and Presbyterian ordination. How can he be a sectarian?

This case is not an exceptional one. The average communicant did not choose his church relationship after an intelligent study of several different commun-

ions and a conclusion that one of them represented his views. He is a member of his church because he was born and reared in it, or because he was led into it by circumstances which had little or nothing to do with an opinion as to the relative merits of that church as compared with others. Many Christians, on moving to a new home, select their church, not with reference to any denominational predilection, but with reference to a variety of other preferences—the minister whose preaching they like, or the friends whom they happen to know. A young lady joins the church of her husband. A son brought up in a Baptist family prefers the Episcopal service. A Methodist wants to hear a Congregational divine and joins his church. There is not one of the larger communions which is exclusively composed of ministers or laymen who were brought up within its fold, nor is there one which is holding all its own young people, some of whom are going to different churches on account of social or geographical considerations without regard to their early training. The membership of the Baptist church, near which I am writing this chapter, is made up of former members of a dozen different denominations who have been attracted by the brilliant preaching of its pastor, and a similar condition of affairs exists in almost every large city church in the country. Thousands of lay office bearers have never read the doctrinal and ecclesiastical articles of their respective churches, save in the most perfunctory way, and they could not repeat the catechism to save their lives. They assented to them when they were inducted into office, in some such way as a public official, in taking the oath of office, swears that he accepts the Constitution and that he will faithfully

enforce the laws. He has not taken the trouble to read them, but he assumes that they are all right as far as he is concerned.

The coming generation will be even more indifferent to denominational distinctions. Nine-tenths of the young men of to-day are receiving their education in colleges and universities which ignore all sectarian divisions. Students who desire to attend their own churches may receive permission to do so, but few seek such permission. The student body as a whole attends the common college chapel service, hears clergymen of all communions, discerns no real doctrinal difference between their sermons, and finds his religious companionship in the undenominational college branch of the Y. M. C. A. Even the denominational colleges seldom obtrude denominationalism. They are, as a rule, entirely unsectarian in their teaching and do not hesitate to advertise the fact in their eagerness to secure students. The consequence is that our young men are growing up to know little and care less about the tenets which separated their grandfathers into rival denominations. This indifference is not confined to those who expect to remain laymen. Some students for the ministry go from college to undenominational theological seminaries, and on their graduation choose their field of labour with primary reference to need or opportunity and without regard to its denominational affiliations. A committee of The Foreign Missions Conference of North America called attention to the fact that this tendency has gone so far that a certain prominent board, where nine sets of candidate papers were presented for approval at a single meeting, found that the denominational affiliations of these candidates

were as follows: Congregational two, Methodist Episcopal two, Presbyterian one, Church of Christ one, Baptist one, German Lutheran one, Reformed Presbyterian one.

In these circumstances, it is vain to imagine that any communion can be strictly kept to its historic denominational position. Its membership is continually shifting for other than denominational reasons. Its leading men are already shifting in the same way. A Methodist clergyman becomes pastor of a Congregational church. A Congregationalist accepts a call to a Presbyterian church. Neither clergyman makes any change whatever in his theological or ecclesiastical beliefs, and neither is expected to do so either by the congregation which calls him or the ecclesiastical body which admits him to its fellowship. Transfers of this kind are not merely personal. The churches concerned have officially ratified them by accepting the transferred clergymen and inducting them as office bearers with full standing in the communion which they have entered. Nor is this all. In making territorial divisions and readjusting boundary lines so as to avoid overlapping, numerous churches have been shifted bodily from one communion to another by formal agreement between the governing bodies in the field. In Korea and India, such transfers involving thousands of Christians have taken place between Methodists and Presbyterians. March 13, 1914, a conference of representatives of the Anglican Church Missionary Society's Mission, and the American Presbyterian Board's Mission at Kasganj, India, agreed that the Anglicans should withdraw from the Etah District and that the Presbyterians should withdraw from an adjacent one, the Indian Christians in each case

to fall under the care of the Mission left in sole possession of the field. Similar agreements have been made in numerous instances in the United States, especially between Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and committees are making earnest efforts to lessen the evils of over-churching in small communities by encouraging feeble congregations to consolidate, the denominational affiliation of the consolidated church to be determined by priority of occupation or preponderance of interest.

If such agreements are justifiable in mission fields abroad and in small communities at home, why are they not justifiable wherever like conditions exist? If it is proper for four denominations to unite in a Montana village or an India district, why is it not proper for them to unite in the country at large? Mere size should not be determinative. Truth is not a matter of numbers. If a communion of a million believers has a vitally distinctive message to the world which no other communion is adequately voicing, the duty of proclaiming it inescapably rests upon each of its constituent congregations whether it has ten or ten hundred members. In that case, the communion should not only refuse to be a party to all such arrangements as have been mentioned, but it should refuse to permit pulpit exchanges with ministers of other communions, decline to accept certificates of membership from them or to join in any coöperative movements which imply recognition of equality, and they should plant their congregations wherever they can, irrespective of the presence of other denominations. Clergymen who take this position are consistent at least. The fact that this attitude, when taken, is now so generally deprecated, that those who still adhere to it usually consider them-

selves on the defensive, that most communions gladly exchange pulpits, intercommune, accept one another's baptisms, ordinations, and letters of membership transfer, and are manifesting an increasing disposition to enter into territorial, federative, coöperative, and even union agreements—these facts eloquently testify to the breakdown of denominationalism. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion either that the denominations should not have gone so far as they have, or that they should go farther on the present road which leads straight to union.

It is clear that new lines of cleavage are forming and that these lines are not running parallel with denominational lines but are crossing them at right angles. Christians who wish to associate themselves with others of congenial religious convictions find them outside, as well as inside, their particular communion. When Christian men of to-day form associations of kindred minds, they ignore denominational affiliations, as scores of movements and organizations show. If I were to make a list of the men with whom I find myself in the closest sympathy in the real things of the Christian life, it would include Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans, Quakers and Disciples.

The intellectual heresy that has wrought quite as much mischief as many a doctrinal heresy is expressed in the sentence: "Conscience does not permit me to agree with you." The questions which we are now discussing are not between the inherently right and the inherently wrong, nor is the issue between good men and bad men. The differences between communions are differences of opinion between Christian brethren as to what the Scriptures teach and what

God requires. These opinions have been formed not primarily by conscience but by judgment. Conscience does not tell men what is right. It tells them to do what is right. It is judgment that tells them what is right—reflection, prayer, Bible study, consultation with wise and good men. That is to say, we arrive by rational and intellectual processes at a knowledge of what the right is, and then conscience tells us to follow it. When therefore Christian brethren differ as to what the Scriptures teach or as to what Christ desires them to do, it is unfair for one party to insist that the question is one of conscience so that there is an end to all discussion. The other party would be equally justified in saying that it is conscientious too, and thus there would be a deadlock.

It is not true that it makes no difference what a man believes, so that he is conscientious. There is a wider difference between right and wrong thinking than such a flippant and superficial saying might indicate. It makes a great deal of difference whether a man believes that it is proper for him to have one wife or two wives. To say that any religious belief is sufficiently good if a man is sincere in holding it is to be equally superficial. The most wretched travesties upon the Christian religion have been advocated by sincere men and women. The Spanish Inquisitors sincerely believed that they were doing God service when they tortured and burned Protestants, and in our own day the sincerity of Mormons is indisputable.

Let us follow conscience by all means. We should be untrue to ourselves if we did not; but let us be sure that our consciences are right. The Bible writers qualify the word conscience by various terms which

imply that conscience may be of varying degrees of trustworthiness as a guide to conduct. They speak of it as "weak" (1 Cor. viii. 12), "good" (1 Tim. i. 5), "pure" (1 Tim. iii. 9), "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 2). They exhort us to have "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Hebrews x. 22), and to remember that "the blood of Christ" will "cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews ix. 14). It is not enough therefore to be conscientious unless our consciences are illuminated and clarified by the Spirit of God. If a Christian has a conscience which prevents him from communing with his brother Christian, he may wisely look for the reason in his own prayer closet as well as in his brother's position, so that before he condemns, he may be able to say with Paul: "I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense towards God and men alway." [1]

"It is not possible," says Mr. J. H. Oldham, "to go back to the unity which was broken up at the Reformation, but only to go forward towards a larger and higher unity, which recognizes and is based upon the freedom of the Christian man. To seek coöperation along these lines, however, makes large demands upon character. Behind all the consideration and discussion of the question of coöperation, ennobling it and filling even petty details with large and deep meaning, lies the question—a question of real and great historical significance—whether there is among the leaders of the missionary movement the loftiness of Christian character, the statesmanship, the largeness of vision, the breadth of sympathy, and the faith in God to enable them to achieve, for the sake of the evangelization of

[1] Acts xxiv. 16.

the world, in a measure that has never been achieved before, a living, free, rich, effective unity, in which the gifts that God has bestowed upon each will find their highest expression, and the resources with which He has entrusted His Church will be used to the uttermost for the speedy advancement of the Kingdom of God." [1]

[1] Paper read at the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, Swanwick, June, 1913.

VI

CURRENT OBJECTIONS TO ORGANIC UNION

OBJECTIONS to organic union are numerous and strenuously urged. Opinions differ as to their weight. Perhaps one's judgment is affected to some extent by his presuppositions. An honest confession is said to be good for the soul, and I therefore frankly admit that I so strongly believe that our Lord desires His followers to "be one," and that the proper conduct of His work in the world imperatively requires oneness that I approach objections with an earnest desire to find a way through them if possible. The end to be sought is so splendid that one feels determined to get to it, no matter what obstacles may be interposed. St. Paul said: "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."[1] "And," not but; as if the very fact of difficulties, which he candidly recognized, nerved him to greater resolution to overcome them. If this be a fault, I must plead guilty to it. Are the opponents of union prepared to claim immunity from any presupposition against it?

We are first confronted by the popular logomachy which splits hairs between unity and union, declaring that unity is desirable, but not union. This is "the false alternative" again, the assumption that union implies mechanical uniformity so that it is something

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

wholly different from unity. Let it be granted that there are dictionary shades of difference, that men may be actuated by the spirit of good will and brotherly love and yet belong to separate organizations for administrative purposes. This may be a proper use of the term when it is applied to the relations between Christians in America and Christians in Holland, for there are national, linguistic and geographical reasons to be considered. But is the term fairly applicable to the relations of denominations in the same country? Here the normal expression of unity is union. A Presbyterian journal quotes with warm approval a statement in a Methodist paper that "what we need is unity, not union—unity of spirit, unity of purpose, unity of faith, unity of general plan, unity of effort. That is the blessed desideratum for which our Master prayed." Will some one have the goodness to explain why Christians who have all these kinds of unity should insist upon separate worship and organization in the same community? As a matter of fact, they do not. Wherever there is unity of "spirit," "purpose," "faith," "plan," and "effort," there is readiness for "union." It is not rationally conceivable that believers who are united in these ways should refuse to belong to the same church. If they insist upon standing apart, it is because they do not have unity. Separate congregations may be required by other considerations; but the spirit which would keep them apart denominationally is far from being the spirit of unity.

An eminent clergyman feelingly declared at The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910: "This is the unity that we desire." Was it indeed? If he had proposed that the members of that Con-

ference partake together of the sacrament of Holy Communion or attend a Sunday morning church service which he would conduct, he would quickly have discovered that real unity was still very far away. Those who were present at that historic Conference had reason to thank God that it registered the high water mark of unity thus far. But its members could not even unite in the singing of hymns unless care was exercised in their selection, and some of them would not have come at all except on the understanding that they were doing so as missionary workers rather than as clergymen and that attendance would not commit them on ecclesiastical questions.

It is easy to use spiritual unity as a bandage for the sore of disunion in such a way as to leave the hurt unhealed. One recalls the lines quoted by Canon Farrar in speaking of forgiveness:

> "Forgive? How many will say forgive, and find
> A sort of absolution in the sound
> To hate a little longer?"

I once heard a minister argue that our Lord's statement in John x. 16, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd," is consistent with many denominational flocks. The good man evidently knew more about denominations than he did about sheep. Who ever heard of a shepherd dividing his sheep into several flocks because they did not agree with one another and refused to occupy the same fold? If he divides them, it is because one enclosure is not large enough to hold all, and then the division is a purely haphazard one, a sheep being driven for the night into whichever fold happens to be most convenient. If there are too many

communicants in a given town to be accommodated in one edifice, or if they are too widely scattered to make it practicable for them to reach it, of course, a second or third "flock" would be formed. But this is merely the parish system within a single communion, and surely it affords no parallel to a division into several denominations of Christians who could easily form one church. Some commentators hold that our Lord's words refer to an ethical and inward unity rather than to an outward uniformity. But I am not advocating uniformity, but a corporate union which is the natural expression of inward unity. Can it be seriously argued that Christ's disciples have "inward unity" if they refuse to unite?

After I had expressed this opinion in an address, a friend urged that Christ told His followers that they should be one even as He and the Father are one, and that as the Son and the Father were not one body, neither were believers to be. Are we then to conclude that the distinction between Christ and the Father is analogous to the distinction between Methodists and Baptists, or Congregationalists and Episcopalians, and that Christians may be one even as the Father and the Son are one and still insist upon going their independent ways even to worshipping apart where they are so few that they could readily worship together? Such an emasculation of the natural meaning of our Lord's words comes perilously near to travesty. One is reminded of Mark Twain's story of an uncle who called biblical exegesis the "spiral twist" because "it was always difficult to drive a straight text through an unaccommodating cork, but that if you twisted it, it would go." After a minister had eloquently argued

that the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one was consistent with denominational separations, a little girl naïvely asked her mother: "Mamma, if Jesus didn't mean what He said, why didn't He say what He meant?"

"You surely would not have all the evangelical Christians of America in one communion, would you?" a critic queried in amazement. Why not? All are citizens of one country. We freely recognize unity in diversity in civil affairs. America has political parties which profess to differ regarding the most fundamental questions of politics. Candidates with loud voices and frantic gesticulation warn their fellow citizens that the success of the other party would undermine free institutions, destroy the constitution, bring to naught the labours of the fathers, and plunge the country into irremediable ruin. After the election, however, the country manages to go on quite as well as it did before. It never occurs even to the bitterest partisans that their political differences justify separate governments, one for Republicans, another for Democrats, and another for Socialists, in spite of the wide differences between them on some of the very things that government is for. Men of like views have a kind of loose party organization; and so may church members, as witness High and Low Churchmen, Premillenarians and other affinity groups. But citizens of all parties live peaceably under one government and without sacrifice of their rights and liberties. It is only in the semi-civilized republics of Mexico and South America that political opponents refuse to live amicably together under the same government. Are religious ties weaker than political ties? It is odd to hear Christian men in-

sisting upon different governments in religion for reasons which they contemptuously and unsparingly condemn in South American revolutionists. We have already recognized that Christians of Great Britain and the United States naturally require distinct ecclesiastical organizations for the efficient discharge of their national responsibilities. But why should Christians who occupy the same territory, speak the same language and preach the same Gospel be independently constituted?

The Roman Catholic Church is often cited as an objectionable illustration of organic union. The illustration is not germane. The Protestant argument against the Roman Catholic Church is not that it has one organization but that this organization is imposed from without the membership with a Pope claiming divine authority as the Vice-gerent of God. It is true that he is elected, but not by the people. The power of the Roman Catholic hierarchy emanates from a source which is beyond their reach. The irremovable rectors of a diocese and the bishops of a province may submit three names for a bishopric, but the Pope appoints at his pleasure. Such a system is not possible among Protestants, for their organizations are formed by the people themselves and they cannot exercise any more authority than the people give them. And yet, as we have noted elsewhere, even all the power of the Roman Catholic Church has not been able to secure uniformity. The North American and South American types of Romanism are far apart, and so are the ultramontane and the Modernist.

An eminent clergyman has succinctly summarized his objections to union as follows: "On the general sub-

ject of church union, I find myself very much out of sympathy with prevailing opinions. It is not with me a question whether it is possible, but whether it is at all desirable in the long run. It seems to me that in countries where Christianity is well established, like the United States, true religion would have much more to lose than to gain by a union which would place approximately the whole body of believers under one organization. In such a case, the purity of church discipline both in matters of doctrine and of conduct, the freedom of the State in its relation to the Church and that of the Church in relation to the State, as well as the freedom of the individual conscience would stand in grave jeopardy. It seems to me that with all the disadvantages which disunion entails, it has yet made possible the freedom and spirituality of the Church since the Reformation, and that without a complete alteration of the human factors in the problem the complete success of any endeavour at general church unity would result in evils far greater than we now have, in a Church too powerful to be resisted either by the State or by the individual, and in the government of such a Church by a small knot of clever ecclesiastical politicians."

This looks formidable, but will it bear analysis? Does experience prove that the modern Church is pure, spiritual and free in inverse proportion to its size? The largest Protestant communions, like the Methodist Episcopal, have quite as much "purity of discipline" and "freedom of individual conscience" as the smallest ones. Mere size appears to have no relation to either discipline or freedom. Whatever spirituality disunion has helped the Church to achieve since the Reformation

is no longer being helped by it, and "small knots of clever ecclesiastical politicians" are notoriously more tyrannous in little denominations than in big ones. The notion that unrelated groups of persons can better guard personal rights and more efficiently discharge common responsibilities is purely chimerical. We long ago learned this in civil affairs. The individual citizen in a nation of a hundred million people has more real liberty to work out his highest welfare than the member of a small tribe, and he receives from his national relationship an enormously greater opportunity and impetus to do so. As for the separation of Church and State, if it can be maintained only by keeping the churches divided against themselves in their present chaotic condition, it is purchased at fearful cost.

We are told that "conditions are not ripe" for organic union. This objection confuses men with Providence. Conditions have been ripe for a dozen years. It is the objectors that are unripe. Of course there are obstacles; there always are to every good movement. But most of them are more formidable in imagination than in reality. We may say with Henry V at Agincourt:

"All things are ready, if our minds be so."

"We talk," said the Rev. Dr. J. Campbell Gibson of Swatow, "as if we were under some inscrutable doom of alienation which we cannot escape. Perhaps the spectre which haunts us is but the shadow of ourselves, and if we could all turn full face to the light, it would disappear. What if the chief problem of the Church should prove to be Ourselves!"

Opponents of union often declare that they are wait-

ing for clearer evidences of the divine Will and that when God is ready for His people to unite, He will make it plain. One is reminded of the rebuke administered by a venerable minister to the youthful William Carey after the latter had passionately pleaded that the Gospel might be sent to the heathen: "Sit down, young man. When God wants the heathen converted, He will do it without your help." Such opponents might take a hint from the old negro who said that he prayed earnestly but without avail that the Lord would send him a job, but that when he changed his prayer and asked that he be sent to a job, the prayer was answered at once. God's sovereignty was not intended to be an excuse for man's shortcomings. That He can bring His purposes to pass without our help is not an adequate reason why we should fail to do our duty. To pile up human obstacles to Christian union and then sit down and wait for God to remove them is a use of Calvinism that would make the Genevan theologian resort to the imprecatory Psalms. Objections to union are painfully numerous; but man has made them and man should remove them.

One of the inscrutable mysteries of our time is that when the Church of God finds itself face to face with all the united powers of the world, the flesh and the devil, when the providential pointings to unity are so clear, when any one should be able to see that a crippling hindrance to the victory of Christianity lies in the fact that the Church is a house divided against itself—it is, I say, an amazingly inscrutable mystery that good men, devout men, who honestly believe that they are doing God service, try to obstruct every effort of the followers of Christ to combine against the common

enemy. For myself, if a man believes Jesus Christ to be the divine Son of God, if he accepts Him as his Saviour and Lord, and if he devotes himself to making Him intelligently known to men, I propose to work with that man in coöperation or federation or organic union, or any other relationship that is practicable, whether I agree with him on other things or not.

It has been objected that union is not necessary since God is blessing the work of denominations. No doubt; God often makes the wrath of man to praise Him. But that does not excuse the wrath, nor does it prove that it was necessary to the blessing. And is it true that God is so manifestly blessing the denominations that there is no occasion for searchings of heart? Statistics show that the average net increase of the evangelical communions in the United States in a recent year was only one and eight-tenths per cent., and that only forty-three per cent. of the rural churches are growing, eighteen per cent. being stationary and thirty-nine per cent. actually losing. The North American Section of the World Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches laments "the small headway our churches are making, that the population of our country is increasing more rapidly than the membership of the evangelical churches, that last year one of our strong denominations, whose advance was more encouraging than usual, could only report a net gain of a little more than two per cent., and that that meant a gain of one as the result of the efforts of thirty-seven communicants."[1] President William DeWitt Hyde of Bowdoin College says that New England is now more pagan than Puritan. The Rev. Dr. Howard Duffield, pastor

[1] Report of the Committee on Evangelistic Work, February 11, 1914.

of the First Presbyterian Church of New York, declares that this city is fast becoming as heathen as India, and "The National Bible Institute" issues an appeal by Mr. Hugh R. Monro which declares that "more than three millions of souls in Greater New York are alien to Christ" and that "while scores of churches and other Christian agencies accomplish a magnificent work in their sphere, it remains true that a majority of the city's population is absolutely untouched by any Christian influence and so completely adrift religiously as to be ignorant of the elementary facts of the Christian Gospel." Only one denomination in Chicago "has held its own in proportion to city population increase in fifteen years."[1] Several churches of Great Britain report an actual loss of membership during recent years and sadly confess that emigration does not satisfactorily account for the decline.

The Christian who can transmute such facts into proofs of divine sanction of denominationalism has a skill in theological sleight-of-hand and an acrobatic dialectical agility which would excite the wonder of a scholastic philosopher of the Middle Ages. It is indeed a solace to reflect that God may overrule sectarian obstacles to the progress of His Kingdom; but what right have we to make His forbearance a shield for our schism? And what ground is there for believing that the divine blessing would not be much greater if we were united?

It is significant that spiritual results are most marked in the foreign field where denominationalism is weakest, and that the most notable revivals at home attend the preaching of a common Gospel in union meetings.

[1] Bulletin of the Hyde Park Presbyterian Church, May 24, 1914.

Many churches have received their only appreciable accessions for a decade in union services which obliterated for the time being every vestige of denominational separation. Whatever may have been the blessings of denominationalism in the past, the time has now come when, as Bishop Charles P. Anderson well says: "The united Church can preach a fuller Gospel, provide more men to preach it, and do it with a more economic expenditure of God's money, than can the aggregate of all the churches."

It is deeply to be regretted that efforts of communions to affect organic union have sometimes been obstructed by lawyers and courts. One wishes to write respectfully of judicial procedure; but it is rather difficult to respect the court decisions that have been solemnly handed down in some of our American states. The layman who is disposed to criticize them finds himself in good professional company, for eminent jurists have scathingly arraigned them. The decisions of learned judges have been radically contradictory, some courts having approved the consolidation of churches and other courts having disapproved, although there were no essential differences in the laws and principles involved. The consolidation of the Presbyterian and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches in the United States a few years ago was declared lawful in some courts and unlawful in others. It is always easy for a dissatisfied minority to find technical lawyers who will conjure up all sorts of difficulties about property rights that might be jeopardized by union; but we believe that the best legal opinion is in accord with the deliverance of The Presbyterian General Assembly of 1910, which declared "that Christian Churches have

an inherent right to unite, arising out of their unity in Jesus Christ their Supreme Head, and that no law should be passed by any state, nor can any state pass laws, impairing or hindering this right in any manner, whether finding expression in efforts for coöperation, federation or organic union."

It is not complimentary to the honoured dead to argue that, if they were living to-day, they would insist that their well-meant efforts to promote by their bequests the welfare of Christ's work should, in changed circumstances which they could not foresee, now be used to block its further progress. I prefer to do them the justice of believing that they would be among the first to recognize the new conditions and that the very last thing that they would desire would be to have their gifts used for the perpetuation of schism long after it ceased to be useful. Of course, courts must carefully guard the rights of testators. No one wishes to see these rights disregarded when definitely known. Self-interest would prevent such a wish, for men and women are living whose disposition to make bequests might be affected by a light setting aside of former wills. But as a rule, the objection from bequests is not based upon clear testamentary language but upon the assumption that the testator would not have left his money to a given church if he had supposed that it would ever unite with another church. In such cases, why should a lawyer claim betrayal of trust? A layman's opinion on this subject may not be of value, but an eminent judge has declared in a historic decision that "the law is common sense," and the Supreme Court of the United States is the author of the now familiar phrase: "the rule of reason."

Where courts persist in interposing legal obstacles to union, it is better to let property go than for great bodies of believers to sacrifice the present interests of the Kingdom of God to an artificial interpretation of the alleged wishes of a few score donors of a former generation. An endowment in such circumstances may become a millstone about the neck. Living principles are more important than bonds or buildings, and poverty may be more precious than great riches, as the Free Church of Scotland showed a generation ago.

It must be admitted that there are formidable obstacles to union. In addition to the objective ones that lie in denominational divisions, there are subjective obstacles that are quite as serious. Inherited ideas and valued associations powerfully influence one's judgment. Few men can view dispassionately and impartially a question that affects their own families or positions. Many a union project has been hampered by the underlying fear of leaders in the smaller communion that consolidation with a larger body would abolish their offices or lessen their prominence. "We would be lost in such a big church," is the familiar refrain. One might rejoin that the big church offers a correspondingly wider field for able leadership and that the narrow limits of a small sect have artificially cramped many a strong man and prevented him from doing the great work that he was fitted to do. But the opposition that springs from lifelong relationship or personal interest is seldom amenable to argument, for these considerations usually work subconsciously and refract the vision of the best and sincerest of men.

Nor can we ignore the clergyman who sincerely believes that uniformity is essential to a church and who

therefore deems it more important to keep his fellow Christians doctrinally or ecclesiastically straight than to preach the Gospel to the lost, concentrating his energies upon the effort to put out or keep out of the Church those who differ with him; a zealous Protestant, and yet exercising for himself the papal claim to unchurch believers who do not think as he does.

We must reckon, too, with the common feeling of humanity that one's own clan is superior to all other clans. History teems with the results of such tribal sentiment, nor can the most enlightened of men readily detach themselves from it. Americans and Englishmen are notorious for this assumption of superiority, and they carry it into every organization that they form, secular and religious. This sentiment has some redeeming traits. Family pride, party loyalty and national patriotism could not easily survive without it. Some of us may well be thankful that parents and friends stand by us irrespective of our desert. "Our country! May she ever be right; but right or wrong, our country!" runs a motto on the wall of a well-known Military Academy. This is not a lofty moral sentiment; but it has tremendous holding power and it enables a government to count with confidence upon popular support in almost any controversy with a foreign power.

Sects, like nations, owe much to this latent feeling. It has perpetuated such churches as the Nestorian, Arminian and Coptic long after all vital religion died within them; and it is perpetuating to-day scores of denominations for whose separate existence no adequate reason remains—religious clans rather than Christian churches, held together by the combined influence of

ancestral pride and social relationship. In civil government, we have learned at sore cost that a proper regard for one's local community and a due regard for its welfare are entirely consistent with a national organization and life, that a man can be a loyal Philadelphian and at the same time a loyal American. The doctrine of "states rights," once so powerful in America, has been greatly modified, Democratic presidents having been the chief modifiers. The interests of the nation are generally recognized as having just precedence. Unfortunately, the churches have not gone so far. They are still in the period, from which our country long ago emerged, when each state jealously demanded independence of every other state. Just as the American colonies had to work their way by toil and struggle through the eras of local democracy, colonial confederation, and states rights into a Federal Government, so the churches are now slowly working their way along essentially the same road, learning generations after the nation a lesson which they should have been the first to proclaim.

VII

THE DOGMATISM OF PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE

BEFORE attempting to enumerate the truths that are so vital to evangelical faith that they must be included in any plan of union, we should do some preliminary thinking.

First of all, we should consider how far our statements of doctrine are philosophical rather than Scriptural. There are more of such statements than we are apt to realize. Most theologians have adopted definite philosophical systems and have used their philosophy in working out their theology. This is notoriously true of Roman Catholic theology, and that the late Pope Pius X had no misgivings on the subject was shown in his open declaration: "We will and ordain that scholastic philosophy be made the basis of the sacred sciences."[1] Protestant systems of theology have also been affected by the philosophical theories that were current when they were framed, and almost every new philosophy issues sooner or later in a new theology. In a discussion of present mooted religious questions, Dr. Francis L. Patton said at Princeton, "that the emphasis of contemporary debate is placed upon questions that are in their nature philosophical and historical. . . . These inquiries again are in many cases conditioned by the theory of the universe

[1] Encyclical on Modernism, September 8, 1907.

which constitutes the philosophical presupposition of those who enter upon historical investigations." [1]

Other men have minds that work with logical precision. They take a fact and deduce a brood of inferences from it. This is natural and sometimes desirable. Some truths carry necessary implications, and an unthinking person who accepts a principle may properly be told of the destination to which it points.

The trouble is that the theologian who classifies truth in accordance with his philosophy is apt to insist that the resultant system is exclusively Scriptural, and that the logician is prone to demand that we shall accept, not only his original fact, but all his uninspired deductions from it. But all men are not philosophers or logicians. It is a well-established principle that one man is not to be held responsible for all the inferences which another draws from his position. I may not understand how a man can interpret the Bible in a certain way and have any real belief in its inspiration, or how he can hold a given opinion regarding Christ's birth and believe in His sinlessness and divinity. But if he avows his belief in the inspiration of the Bible and the sinlessness and divinity of our Lord, I have no moral justification for charging him with repudiating the Scriptures or betraying Christ because he does not see what I regard as the logical consequence of his position. If his heart is obediently and lovingly loyal to Christ and the revealed Word of God as he reads it, he has as clear a right as I have to freedom of interpretation. A denial of this right is certainly not Protestant. One may sometimes reason from facts to absurd conclusions. A young man married a widow who

[1] Centennial Sermon, Princeton Theological Seminary, May 5, 1912.

had a grown daughter. His father met the daughter and married her. Thus the son's stepdaughter became his stepmother and his wife the mother-in-law of her father-in-law. A child was born in each family. A genius in genealogy has worked out that this made the son's mother-in-law, his stepsister, the grandmother of his child, and by a series of clear deductions the son became his own grandfather.

We should distinguish also between truth and temperamental or racial or controversial expressions of it. Men always have differed, do now differ, and probably always will differ as to the relative prominence which should be given to God's sovereignty and man's freedom in doctrinal systems, whether baptism should be by sprinkling or by immersion, whether prescribed forms should be used in the church service, and whether a liberal or a conservative construction should be placed upon creeds. Such differences are not as intellectual or Scriptural as many people imagine. The exponents of any one of these positions are as intelligent, as able, as earnestly desirous of knowing the will of God, and as conscientiously disposed to obey it, as the exponents of the others. As a rule, the attitude is determined, not by a dispassionate weighing of relative arguments, but by heredity, by environment, by disposition. The lines of cleavage between the liberal and the conservative, the churchman and the independent, the man who loves forms and liturgies and the one who wants only the plainest service, are psychological as well as theological and run deeply into human nature. It is vain to imagine that one party will ever convert the other to its views, or that either can drive the other out of the Church, or that a communion can be permanently

limited to any one of these parties. Such differences will unquestionably exist among men to the end of time. If Christians are to concentrate their thought upon these differences, religion will degenerate into sectarianism. There will be controversies and irritations which will make the judicious grieve, which will impair the harmony and efficiency of the Church, and bring reproach upon the name of Christian. Denominational uniformity is sought at bitter cost when it separates Christians into rival camps. Unity in essentials and liberty in non-essentials are far better than a slavery to non-essentials which destroys the true oneness of believers.

We are far from believing that all differences between religious parties can be attributed to temperament or environment; but more can be attributed to them than is commonly supposed. One age may learn more of God than another age and make a larger appropriation of His revelation, just as certain promises mean more to a Christian in sorrow than to one in happiness. There are some tragic crises that make men instinctively turn to the imprecatory Psalms and demand a theology which clothes the truth in a coat of mail against the enemies of the Church. There are other experiences which send men to the Gospel according to St. John and lead to a theology which irradiates life with the sunshine of love. Some men conceive Christianity in terms of legal procedure. God is a judge, man a criminal, Satan the prosecuting attorney, Christ the counsel for the defense. Others interpret Christianity in terms of the family. God is the father, Christ the elder brother, all men sons. Some interpret Christianity in terms of doctrine and others in terms of life.

In like manner, we might speak of those who view religion as an intellectual system scientifically classified, and of those who care nothing for an orderly arrangement of dogmas but who deem religion as an experience to be realized. The latter may be hopelessly confused theologically, but they know their Lord and they love Him with all their hearts. The philosopher and the child, the logician and the emotionalist, the sacerdotalist and the puritan, the mystic and the disciplinarian, the sanguine and the phlegmatic, the artistic and the practical, the optimist and the pessimist, the ritualist and the Quaker—all are with us and we would not willingly part with any of them.

It is impossible to make up a church of any one of these types alone. Every communion has them all. Indeed there are myriads of individual Christians who unite in their own persons two or more of these types. Who of us does not blend some of them in ordinary experience or find that the varying emergencies of life throw first one and then another into dominance? One of the strongest arguments for solidarity of ecclesiastical organization has been written by a Congregationalist, and one of the strongest arguments for the independence of the congregation has come from the pen of a Presbyterian. The former was discussing a national condition which could not be handled by local groups of Christians, and the latter had felt the heavy hand of ecclesiastical authority. The Rev. R. C. Gillie reminds us of the story of Cardinal John Henry Newman's meeting an old friend, a clergyman of the Church of England, after a lapse of many years. In the crowded assembly, the long estrangement was somehow obliterated. The souls of the two friends leapt to each other, and they

drew aside into an alcove for a brief conversation. The clergyman ventured to say: "Cardinal, why did you leave us? We never could understand." The answer came after a moment's pause: "Because I desired a horizon to my theology." "That," adds Mr. Gillie, "I suppose marks the dividing line. Some of us are content if we are sure of the centre; others are miserable unless the whole circumference is clear."

Men who have no imagination are prone to a hard literalism of interpretation. I heard a well-known evangelist solemnly assert that the passage in Isaiah, "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," means that the desert of Sahara will one day be covered with roses and that to doubt it was to doubt the Scriptures. Another eminent clergyman, who was too skillful a dialectician to be prudently argued with, held that the vowel points in the Hebrew text had been placed there by inspiration of God and were an integral part of the infallible Word which it was profanation to challenge. Still another, a theological professor of wide repute, was wont to advise his students never to concede that there were errors even of translation or transmission in the sacred text, because if one once admitted any error whatever, there was no logical stopping place until the whole Bible was gone. As I listened to his eloquent lectures, I felt almost afraid to remove my overcoat in public lest, if I once began to undress, I might not be able to stop until I was naked and ashamed. Such men are extremists of course; but they are fairly numerous nevertheless, and they are invariably opposed to union with anybody who does not speak their shibboleth.

The dogmatism of partial knowledge, of fallible hu-

man opinion! How grievously Christianity has suffered from it! There are persons who respect no judgment but their own, who can conceive of no other interpretation of facts, and who, perhaps sorrowfully, perhaps contemptuously, relegate all who differ with them to the limbo of the heretical or unsaved. An English clergyman who was visiting a certain Christian worker heard an animated account of what was described as a direct interposition of Providence which prevented a loss of life that would have inevitably befallen an impenitent man. When he mildly questioned whether it was certain that God had worked by a special providence which could not be otherwise accounted for, the host fell upon his knees and prayed that the clergyman might be reconciled to his Maker! This clergyman would sympathize with the priest in charge of the Greek Church in Passaic, New Jersey, who was bitterly assailed by a Russian newspaper of Jersey City for "making void the Orthodox Faith because he shaved himself."

Our Lord's caution about censorious judgments has far-reaching applications. Men who are over-strict in some things are often lax in others. The most vehement champion of total abstinence from liquors that I have ever known smoked a dozen cigars and drank seventeen cups of tea during an average day; and another man, who bitterly denounced the heresy of the dual authorship of Isaiah, was a director in a corporation whose business methods, when exposed, were generally arraigned as unchristian if not criminal. "I have noticed," remarked the epigrammatic Dr. William C. Gray of Chicago, "that persons who have boiler iron over some of their convictions usually have lattice

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work over others." One is reminded of the man of whom it was said that he

> "Compounds for sins he is inclined to
> By damning those he has no mind to."

We need not conclude that such men are greater sinners than some of us who criticize them. Their moral judgments were clear on the things which they believed to be wrong; and if they were not clear on other things, it was because they did not realize their moral implications—because they had partial knowledge or distorted spiritual vision. What is needed is the education of the whole man, the recognition of Christianity's legitimate application to the entire range of human thought and activity; a conception of religion, not as a search-light that sends only a narrow shaft of light into enveloping darkness, but as a sun that dispels all darkness and illuminates all truths and duties.

"A theological controversy," says President Woodrow Wilson, "arises out of doubt. It arises out of a difference of opinion; it arises out of a difference of information. Somebody has said that the church a man belongs to is largely a question of temperament, largely a question of his spiritual approach to the angle from which he looks at a thing. Some people enjoy the service. Presbyterians have an inordinate taste for sermons. They come to be instructed; they come to hear things discussed; they come to hear life expounded and the standards applied to life upon some high plane of exposition; whereas others wish to have their emotional sides appealed to in preference to their intellectual sides. But however the variations may go, no matter what the ephemeral feature may be, no matter what

the external form may be, they are all looking for a foothold; they are all looking for some firm ground of faith upon which to walk. Therefore every community ought to realize that the search for God takes precedence over anything else. What is the foundation of life? What is the source of our strength? Where is our salvation? Not in ourselves, but in something external to ourselves and greater than ourselves, from which we are to arise. This search is fruitless if it issues in mere conclusion, if it issues in mere intellectual certitudes; it is fruitless unless it gets embodied in men."[1]

It may be difficult for us to realize to what an extent the white man has stated Christianity in terms of his racial characteristics. Perhaps this is one reason why Asiatics so often call it "the foreigner's religion." A creed is what a church believes. Whether it is better to have a written creed and play fast and loose with it, as some Presbyterians do, or an unwritten creed and stick to it, as some Baptists do, is an interesting but subordinate question. The truths which go into creeds are in the Bible and Christian experience in some such way as the facts of astronomy are in the heavens. A creed is man's arrangement of those facts. The arrangement will therefore be influenced by the environment of the men who make it, their temperament, their religious experience, and the errors which are most prevalent at the time and against which they wish to testify. Grant that their object is to state eternal and universal truth in a way that will be helpful in every other land and every succeeding age. No creed has ever yet been written by white men which even their

[1] Address at Trenton, October 23, 1912.

own descendants now regard as adequate. Most of the communions of to-day have a creed which differs more or less widely from the historic creeds of the earlier centuries. Some communions have formulated their alterations in official revisions, and others have allowed the old creed to stand and unofficially sanctioned a modern interpretation of it. But whether the changes have been written down and ecclesiastically adopted or not, every intelligent person knows that they have been made in fact. The Westminster divines, engaged in a terrific struggle with a powerful Roman Catholic hierarchy, whose Pope claimed to be the Vice-gerent of God upon earth and denied salvation to those who did not submit to his rule, naturally took the truths of Holy Scripture which contravene that assertion and built them into an impregnable fortification against the assaults of Rome. In doing so, they made a contribution of immense value to the Christian thought of the world. The Presbyterian Church itself, however, has found that the Westminster emphasis upon fore-ordination is so misunderstood in an age which is not thinking of Roman pretentions, that the Church deemed it necessary to issue, in 1902, a "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith" in order to give a summary of its position in terms that could be comprehended more easily by the modern mind. If such a restatement of an English creed was needed by American Presbyterians who were the descendants of the Westminster divines, how much more is some such restatement needed for the Christians of Asia who are radically different in race, temperament, environment and outlook?

And this is simply an illustration of what is true of all the historic creeds. They were formed in times of

controversy, constructed to serve the religious needs of the age which produced them, and to bring into clearest possible relief the doctrines which prevailing heresies denied or obscured. When one of those creeds is translated in Asia, what is the result? The East Indian Christian feels that it does not present Scriptural truth in the form best adapted to a people whose mental and spiritual attitudes are subconsciously influenced by centuries of polytheism and pantheism. The Chinese Christian does not find exactly what he wants for a nation which is characterized in every fibre of its warp and woof by agnostic materialism and ancestral worship. The Oriental Christian knows little and cares less about our western controversies; but he has others of his own which are very real and vital to him. He approaches Christ from another starting point and is obliged to testify against different errors.

The missionary sometimes meets an intelligent native who says in substance: "I cannot accept your creed, but I gladly accept your Christ." Very well, let him accept our Christ, and then work out his own creed from his study and experience of Christ and with a view to the exigencies of his own situation. He will probably come out not so far from us as we imagine, though he may arrive by a different road. Perhaps in his journey he will discover some truth which we had not discovered, or bring into new meaning some truth which we knew but had not seen in its right proportion or perspective.

At any rate, what right have we of the West to take a religion that originated in Asia, whose Scriptures were written in an Asiatic language, which was incarnated in One who spent His whole earthly life in

Asia, whose symbols and imagery are Asiatic—what right, I say, has the western white man to take such an Asiatic religion, express it in terms of his own alien thinking, and then carry it back to Asia and demand that Asiatics shall accept his particular version of it and none other? We may well say with the Bishop of Manchester that "if Christianity can only flourish on these terms, it can never become the faith of the world."

Is it said that we have learned something of the meaning of Christ and the Bible which we ought not to withhold from our Asiatic brethren, that we should not ask them to start at the beginning as we did and to acquire by hard experience what we can now teach them? Of course not. Let us tell them everything we know, give them the benefit of everything we have learned. But it is one thing to tell them, and quite another to insist that we are infallible guides, that we have found out all there is to know, and that they must cast their religious experiences in our foreign moulds. "There is," says Bishop Gore of Oxford, "a very specific Anglican colour about our home religion which we ought to have no desire to perpetuate in India. An Englishman, wherever he goes, is apt to identify his religion with his memories of home. We ought to identify our religion with the Christ of all nations. What we should desire is to see a native Church arise with a native episcopate and a native spirit."[1]

Another necessary distinction is between partial and complete views of truth. Here is the tap root of sectarianism. Truth is a sphere, and in looking upon it man sees only one side at a time. One group of men

[1] Address at the consecration of the Bishop of Bombay, Ascension Day, 1908.

are led by inclination or special circumstances to see a given part of the truth. Another group are led to see another part. Both are right in what they see and wrong only in what they ignore. They cannot be blamed for seeing only one side of a sphere at a time or for dwelling upon those aspects of Christian teaching which meet their particular needs. Sectarianism develops when each arraigns the other and erects its denominational fences in such a way as to exclude or unchurch the other. "It is earnestly to be desired that Christians everywhere should cultivate a broader horizon and cherish larger views. One of the great English Prime Ministers, when seeking to persuade certain of his associates to adopt the wide policies which he advocated, said to them: 'Gentlemen, you should study larger maps.' The need of the day in all the churches is a realization of the obligations and opportunities of the twentieth century for bringing the Christian churches of common origin, common faith and common life, so close together that, forgetting their differences, they will work unitedly for the mental, moral and spiritual uplift of all the people." [1]

We should be fair enough to recognize that men who study the Bible as earnestly as we do, and who consecrate their lives to the service of Christ quite as loyally, are not necessarily wrong because they do not belong to our particular communion. Ways of thinking and working in which they have found peace and efficiency cannot be wholly bad. If separately organized, each party is prone to go to an extreme, distorting a segment of truth by overemphasizing it and failing to balance it by its complementary segments. Denomi-

[1] Presbyterian General Assembly, Minutes of 1913, p. 77.

nationalism tends to partial and fragmentary views of Christianity and hence to sectarianism. A united Church would be a Catholic Church, bringing the believer of one type into contact with his fellow Christians of a different type, presenting the truth in its rounded perfection, and preaching the whole Gospel to a needy world.

It is indispensable to that unity for which our Lord prayed that we should recognize the full-orbed nature of truth and that we should welcome all contributions to it. We should have a noble discontent for partial and segmentary ideas of Christ. We cannot comprehend all that He is. The human mind is limited. But we can be broad enough in our outlook and catholic enough in our sympathies to be grateful for what others have found. Is there any Christian who is prepared to say that his particular communion is an adequate expression of the mind of Christ and of the teaching of the Word of God? As a Presbyterian, I am sorry for my fellow member who imagines that our Church has compassed the entire area of the spiritual realm and made for every section of it the most complete map that ever can be prepared. Lest that statement may give readers of other communions too much comfort, let me add that if I thought that one of theirs was any better, I would leave my own and seek admission to it. The more I experience of Jesus Christ and the wider my knowledge becomes of His followers in various lands, the more deeply do I realize that all my knowledge of Him is but a groping; that Christ is larger and richer than anything that I have ever been able to understand regarding Him. A Christ for all men and for all time is not likely to be comprehended by any particular province or decade.

"In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."[1] What does that mean? Are we able even to apprehend what it means? I doubt whether we shall ever know all that Christ is until we can blend the interpretation of Europeans and Americans with that of the self-forgetting loyalty of the Japanese, the practical sense of the Chinese, the profound mysticism of the East Indian, the childlike emotionalism of the African, and the swift intuition of the Korean. The Asiatic, when once regenerated and guided by the Spirit of God, may be more likely to interpret the real meaning of the Bible and of Christ than we who belong to a different race, for he brings an oriental mind and point of view to the interpretation of an oriental Book. We hear much about the undeveloped resources of soil and electricity and mineral deposits; but the vastest undeveloped resources in the universe to-day are the uncharted and unsounded infinities in the character and mission of our Lord. In the words of William Adams Brown, "the Christ I wish to know is not my Christ only, but all men's Christ; not the Christ of the passing hour merely, but the Christ of all time; not the Saviour of my soul simply but the light and life of the whole world. . . . When I see Christ doing for other men what He has done for me; when I detect in the language by which they have described Him, even when that language is not my own, traces of the faith and love and unconquerable hope which He has awakened in me; when, beholding His face as I behold it, I see them looking through Him to the unseen Father from whom He came; when, bowing humbly before His cross as I bow, I find them reading new

[1] Col. ii. 9.

depths and heights of meaning into the old word, 'God is love'; when my consciousness of brotherhood with Him brothers me with men to whom but for Him I should have been a stranger in spirit, then I am sure that I have left the shifting sands of mere opinion and planted my feet on the solid ground of fact. Study men's theories about Christ and you will find division; come to know their experiences of Christ, and you will find unity."[1] Verily,

> "Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Something within us that is surely not ignoble calls for a larger view than our now holden eyes can take. We are not content with what we can clearly see and accurately measure. We long for the vision of the unexplored realm beyond. With Emerson, our aspiring souls say: "We love nothing that ends." "Now we see in a mirror darkly" the dim, blurred reflection from the polished metal of antiquity. When we can rise above the cloudy level of acrimonious debates about definitions and stand upon the sunlit heights where perfect love reigns, we shall find, if I may adapt a noble phrase of Professor James, "an eternal unanimity which has neither birthday nor native land. Perpetually telling of the unity of man with God, our speech antedates language and our message does not grow old."

[1] Address at Auburn, October 23, 1913.

VIII

THE ACCEPTED ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

IT is time to specify more specifically what is meant by the evangelical teaching that is common to the leading communions. I realize that at this point my difficulties thicken, especially as I do not profess to be a theologian or a creed maker. Several years ago the Rev. Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall published a little volume, entitled "Universal Elements of the Christian Religion." One could not but be impressed by the breadth of his spirit, the loftiness of his purpose, and the stateliness of his style; but when the reader tried to ascertain what he meant by the "Universal Elements of the Christian Religion," a satisfactory answer was not easily obtainable. Several times he approached the point where he appeared to be about to enumerate them, but every time he shied off. Perhaps he felt that his book would be more effective if he avoided a statement of particulars which might precipitate controversy, that it was sufficient to affirm that there are universal elements, without attempting to specify them. He may have been wise. Assuredly it would be absurd for me to attempt to give in a chapter a comprehensive summary of Catholic Christian doctrine. But when one is constantly referring to a common faith and making its existence one of the grounds of union, he may be reasonably expected to cite at least a few illustrations of what he means. Even though he may not be com-

petent to decide how many and what they are, or to state them with theological precision, he can indicate some of the truths that he has in mind.

The difficulty with most summaries is that the writers have endeavoured to state their doctrines in such a way as to differentiate their denominational position from those of other communions. The Calvinistic theologian has had the Arminian in mind when he emphasized the sovereignty of God, and in turn the Arminian has had the Calvinist in mind when he emphasized the freedom of man. My own thought has been helped by going clear outside the pale of all denominations and stating the essential truths of our faith, not in terms of denominational differences, but in terms of Christianity as contrasted with the non-Christian faiths of Asia. It is easier to discern what the vital tenets of Christianity are when we place ourselves in imagination in the midst of populations which do not know Christ at all and therefore have an outlook upon life which is radically different from that of men who have been influenced by a denominational environment. When I found myself, not among Methodists, Anglicans and Baptists, but among Hindus, Buddhists and Animists, some beliefs that had hitherto seemed important shrank into relative insignificance, while others expanded into majestic proportions.

The difference between the Christian teaching and the non-Christian is not always the difference between the affirmation and the denial of truth. Some earnest souls, seeking God "if haply they might feel after Him and find Him," have groped their way some distance along the path to knowledge. It is fascinating to study these pre-Christian searchings and speculations; some-

times startlingly near the truth, sometimes sorrowfully far from it, nearly always so vague as to befog the soul, usually so confused with error as to mislead it, never clear enough to guide it aright, and often so overlaying it with superstition that the multitude utterly failed to see it at all. Whatever scattered fragments of truth laborious delving may extricate from the mountainous heaps of pre-Christian writings, the actual fact is that the non-Christian world of to-day has no real knowledge of any of the truths that form the content of Christianity. Where the inspired writers of the Bible proclaimed a new truth, and where they supplemented or clarified one that a few uninspired sages had imperfectly taught before, the practical effect was the same—the presentation of truths in such a way as to enable men to understand what had been misunderstood and to render operative what had been inoperative. I may therefore convey my meaning regarding the essential content of the Christian faith by attempting a partial answer to the question: "What have we to give to the non-Christian world?"

This is a question which searches the deeps of Christian experience and pierces the joints between the fundamental and the accidental, the racial and the universal, the temporary and the permanent. It gains startling emphasis when we remind ourselves that the Christians of the West are contributing over thirty millions of dollars annually and sending hundreds of their choicest young men and women to propagate their faith throughout the non-Christian world. This is a high price to pay, unless we have something to propagate that is beyond price. What is there in our religion that is worth it and which should lead us to respond to

the call of the missionary societies not only to continue to pay it but to quadruple it?

If we take an inventory of our religious possessions from the view-point of this inquiry, we shall probably conclude very quickly that a miscellaneous assortment of them are not worth the labour and expense of transportation to Asia and Africa, although personally we may be glad that we possess them. Whether certain books in the Bible were written by the men whose names they bear, whether the story of Jonah is history or parable, when and how baptism should be administered, whether ordination is validly performed by the laying on of hands by a number of ministers acting as an ecclesiastical body or by one of their number whom they have set apart for that purpose, whether the Lord's Supper is a repetition of Christ's sacrifice or a memorial of it, whether the individual minister is the ecclesiastical equal of every other clergyman or the subordinate of one who has been elected to the bishopric—these and a miscellany of other questions interest me and I have convictions regarding them; but I would never think of devoting my life to an effort to persuade the Mohammedans of Persia or the demon worshippers of the Kameruns that my opinions on such subjects are more nearly correct than those of my fellow Christians of other communions. Missionaries who go to the foreign field for other reasons necessarily take along any opinions that they may happen to have on these matters, but I would turn languidly away from any appeal to support them financially if they had nothing else to preach, or if they made these things the main part of their message. I could use my money to better advantage. The foreign missionary movement never would

have been born on such issues, even though it began in an era of denominational spirit, and it certainly could not live on them to-day. The pioneer missionaries, like their modern successors, while accepting the tenets of their respective communions, preached a common Gospel which transcended all sectarian barriers.

We turn then anew to the question: What have we to give to the non-Christian world that is worth the consecration of our money and our lives?

If we were to ask this question of men in America who are outside of the churches, and perhaps of some inside, they would tell us that we have a civilization to give to the world. Some non-Christian peoples eat with their fingers, squat on their heels and are arrayed in a loin cloth and the atmosphere. We are told that we ought to teach them to use knives and forks, to sit on chairs, and to wear shirts and trousers. Others imagine that it is our duty to give to the peoples of the non-Christian world the appliances of our modern life—sewing-machines, railways, telegraphs, steam and electrical machinery.

But surely that is not our message as Christian men to a needy world. The largest non-Christian nations are already civilized. Are we to speak of the Chinese as uncivilized, a people who enjoyed the blessings of orderly society and made scholarly culture the test of fitness for office when white men were half naked barbarians, and who, in our own day, have carried through the greatest revolution in history in a tenth part of the time and with a tenth part of the bloodshed that western peoples have expended in political upheavals of far less moment? Will any one characterize the Japanese as uncivilized, with their free press, their

public schools, their factories and shipyards, their silks and cloisonné, their army and navy? Russians will not, at any rate. Is India uncivilized? India had a civilization that was old before ours was born, a civilization which found expression in painting and sculpture, in music and poetry, in mathematics and philosophy, in stately temples and splendid palaces. When western white men were forest barbarians, India had a cultivated society of scholars, artists and courtiers.

Are we to talk about civilizing such peoples? They need some of our mechanical apparatus, but they will get it without special effort on the part of the Church. Business corporations will see to that, while there are some features of our civilization that we would be glad if we could keep at home. Among uncivilized peoples like the Africans, improved methods of living undoubtedly follow the work of the Christian missionary. Such changes, however, are not the object of his work but a result of it.

Civilization and character are not synonymous terms. Some social workers in our own country apparently have not learned this. Civilized men may be and often are lacking in the elements of good character. The world needs something more than a gospel of bath tubs and gymnasiums which will make a man a little more decent animal than he was before but may leave him with an unregenerate heart. The corrupt politics of American cities and the bloody battle-fields of Europe bear sad witness to the fact that highly "civilized" men may be little more than varnished barbarians.

Distinguished educators have recently been urging secular education as our best gift to the non-Christian world. Education is indeed needed, and some parts of

the non-Christian world are not likely to get it unless they receive it from western nations. The most populous countries of Asia, however, will get secular education without financial assistance from the West. They are eager to acquire a knowledge of western history, science and philosophy, and they are amply able to secure it. The Chinese require financial help for secular education less than any other people in the world. They have exalted scholarship for two thousand years and are ready to make heavy sacrifice to secure it for their children. They have already developed an elaborate system of government schools, universities and technical colleges. It is true that the supply of suitable teachers is inadequate and that other facilities are comparatively few. Well-equipped institutions of learning cannot be developed in a year; but the Chinese have set themselves to the task with all the industry and vigour which characterize that industrious and capable people, and they are quite competent to work out the problems for themselves. Japan has as excellent a system of modern education as any western nation. Ninety-eight per cent. of the Japanese children of school age are under instruction. The Imperial University in Tokyo is one of the best equipped universities in the world. The American Government has covered the Philippine Islands with public schools. The English long ago began providing educational institutions for the people of India. In these circumstances, to give money for secular education would be to help Asia where it least needs help. Asiatics will obtain what foreign educational counsel they require, as they are obtaining it now, by sending their bright young men to European and American universities and by inviting

Europeans and Americans of their choice to come over to Asia to assist them.

Moreover, secular education cannot supply Asia's fundamental need. To educate is not necessarily to change character; it may only increase power for evil. Greek and Roman culture were at their highest point of development when the ancient world was rotten with vice. The student of the Renaissance knows that Italy was never worse morally than in the period famous for its revival of classic learning. "Under the thin mask of humane refinement," says the historian Symonds, "leered the untamed savage; and an age that boasted not unreasonably of its mental progress was at the same time notorious for the vices that disgrace mankind." Some of the most dangerous men in America are university graduates. Of five hundred and twenty-two men who were convicted in the United States courts for fraudulent use of the mails in a recent year, one hundred and six were college graduates, and one iniquitous concern, which made a specialty of deceiving widows and orphans, ministers and school-teachers, had several valedictorians upon its staff of writers. The most intellectual peoples in the world have turned the Continent into shambles of slaughtered men. Knowledge is power, but it depends upon the principle which regulates it whether the power is for good or for evil. A recent census of the students of the Imperial University in Tokyo, Japan, showed that the students classified themselves as follows: Confucianists six, Shintoists eight, Christians sixty, Buddhists three hundred, Atheists fifteen hundred, Agnostics three thousand. In other words, the highest type of modern secular education, while leading forty-five

hundred of these men away from their ancestral faiths, did not lead them into Christianity but into atheism and agnosticism. What Asia requires is moral principle, and an education which fails to give that is failing to contribute to Asia's vital need.

Others imagine that it is our duty to give to the non-Christian world a church organization, and still others a creed of western manufacture. The objections to these assumptions are discussed in other chapters and therefore need not be given here.

What, then, have we to give, if our primary object is not civilization, secular education, church polity, or creed? We venture to say that the things that we have to give to the world that are really valuable and that are independent of time and circumstance and environment are comparatively few, although the limits of this chapter permit me to state them only in outline.

We must begin where Paul began in his message to the Athenians—with God, "the Lord of heaven and earth," in whom "we live and move and have our being." This is the organizing principle of all true religious thinking. As soon as one enters a non-Christian land, he realizes that absence of the knowledge of God empties human life of all that is essential to its highest meaning. The higher classes seldom conceive of a supreme being in terms of personality and it is difficult to give them an understanding of the conception. The lower classes go to the other extreme. They people the earth and air with spirits, usually brutal, malignant and revengeful, who haunt men from the cradle to the grave. What is called religion is an attempt to propitiate or outwit these evil spirits. There is no realization of a supreme power who can be loved

and that has any special concern for men. W. Petrie Watson, in a profound psychological analysis of the Japanese, declares that "religion conceived as God, and as a final and sufficient explanation of all phenomena, is not an Asiatic notion—and that of religion, as it is held or conceived in Europe, there is little or none in Japan. Almost equally it follows that there is wide-spread superstition."[1] The Chinese, in spite of their materialistic mind, long feared to mine their vast deposits of coal lest they might disturb the spirits of the earth, and were terrified when they saw foreigners build railways because the straight lines made an easy highway for the demons of one village to reach the next one. The Chinese have a vague idea of a supreme being and they would object to being called atheists. But their conception of deity is vague and impersonal. Practically, the religion of China ranges from animism to agnosticism.

In Korea, one often sees trees with rags fluttering from the branches and stones piled around the trunk. He is told that there are devils in the trees and that they are very curious. So the superstitious native tears a strip from his garment and ties it to a limb, or tosses a stone about the trunk, and while the inquisitive devil is examining the rag or stone, the frightened Korean dodges past. When an epidemic of cholera breaks out, the natives believe that a demon rat has gotten into the body, and they make paper cats and fasten them to their doors in the vain hope that the demons may be frightened away by their feline foes. Victor Hugo in a fine passage represents the natural man as bowing down with a sort of sacred horror before the forces of the invisible universe—under the sound of the sea,

[1] "The Future of Japan," pp. 150, 152.

under the murmuring of the trees, under the crash of the thunder, under the blaze of the lightning. It is literally true of the non-Christian man to-day.

Have we any message for this man who either does not believe in a personal God at all, or who fancies that He is an evil spirit trying to injure him—this man who lifts piteous hands to a paper cat? We know that God is a person—holy, just, wise, merciful, our beneficent Sovereign, our loving Father. Will He hear us when we cry to Him? This is one of the profoundest questions of humanity. Anxious men, careworn women, suffering children, illness, adversity, bereavement—the world is full of them. In Japan's proud capital I saw a woman pitifully rub a cancerous breast against a bronze statue of Buddha. In India's metropolitan city I saw a mother prostrate herself in a temple court and carefully extend her arms before her. An attendant marked the spot which the tips of her fingers reached. Rising, she stood upon it and again prostrated herself. I learned that she had travelled in that way forty miles over the dusty highways and under the blistering sun in the hope that she might induce the bloody goddess Kali to save her child who lay at the point of death. Shall we ridicule these superstitions? Any one who can do so surely does not have the divine pity in his heart. Rather should we see infinite pathos in such scenes and interpret them, not as evidences of willful wickedness, but as the blind searchings of heart-broken women for a help which they vaguely feel to be somewhere but of whose existence they have not learned. They

> ". . . stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff."

Does God care? Their religions give no answer. The heavens remain brass and the earth iron. Christianity alone replies: "God is love;" "cast all your anxiety upon Him because He careth for you;" "in nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts;" "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "His father saw him a great way off." Then he must have been looking for him, anxiously gazing far down the road up which he believed his erring son would yet come. We can endure the tragedies of life, bear its burdens, be undismayed by its hardships, if we are sure of the heart of God, confident that over all is One who understands even if we do not, and that though we

> ". . . know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;"

we are sure, with Whittier, that we

> ". . . cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care."

Amid all the hard materialism of our modern life, do we not need to keep our faith in this vital concept of our religion more clear and true? And is it not worth propagating throughout the whole world at any possible cost of time and toil and money?

Closely following the fact of God is the fact of the Incarnation. To conceive of God as a spiritual Being is not enough, enormous as its advance is upon the non-

Christian idea. Without an incarnation, man feels that God is distant, vague, intangible. Living in a world of physical phenomena which he apprehends by sight and sound and touch, man would find it difficult to make real to his thinking a God who had never manifested Himself to the senses which human beings are accustomed to use. Grant for the sake of argument that there are philosophers who could be satisfied without an incarnate God; we have already had occasion to say that few men are philosophers. Thomas has been criticized as if he were a surprising exception; but he spoke in the voice of our common humanity when he doubtingly said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." That is, Thomas wanted physical evidence of spiritual reality. Perhaps he ought not to have wanted it; but he did, and so do we. The Lord knew it, and He very patiently said: "Thomas, reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be not faithless but believing." Then it was that Thomas reverently exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!"

God manifest in the flesh, living visibly among men, sharing their burdens, clarifying their obscure ideas of the Divine, and exemplifying the life of service and self-sacrifice—that was what men needed. History tells us of the universality of that desire. Almost every race has ascribed divinity to one or more of its ancestors or contemporaries. Kings were long venerated as "heaven-born," and this ancient belief persists in Japan to this day. The non-Christian religions were built around deified men. Even the matter-of-fact Chinese

called their emperors the Sons of Heaven and turned Confucius into an object of worship to an extent that would vastly astonish him if he could return to earth. It is true that there are intelligent Japanese who call Shintoism a patriotic cult rather than a religion, and educated Chinese who speak of Confucianism as a code of ethics. But Japanese and Chinese who have become Christians declare that, whatever may be the theory, the masses of the people make Shintoism and Confucianism religions. Buddhist writers insist that the images of Buddha are not actually worshipped, but the superstitious peasant worships them none the less. Humanity demands a God in the form of man, and where it does not have one, it proceeds to make one.

But what a difference between Jesus and the men whom ignorance and superstition have deified! That Guatama and Confucius were good men in character and great men in ability Christians ungrudgingly concede. But who can think of them in comparison with Jesus? The difference is not one of degree but of kind. Goodness in Him became sinlessness, ability became omnipotence, character perfection.

We do not overlook the fact that there are two conceptions of Jesus; one that He was only man, though the best and purest of men; the other that he was both human and divine, "the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man . . . making known the perfect will of God, . . . our Prophet, Priest and King forever." Whatever the first conception may be termed, it is not that of historic Christianity. He whom we preach is a divine Christ and His "Gospel is the power of God." If we have

only an ideal man to present as a perfect example, we have no message worth carrying to the non-Christian world. That world has its own sages who, though not claiming to be sinless, were so much loftier in character than the average man that they might serve as guides to conduct and patterns of propriety. But we preach One who was and who is both "very man" and "very God" and therefore One who can not only tell weak and erring humanity what the right is but who can communicate to them the power to do the right and thus answer the deepest cravings of their souls.

"Jesus is God! If on the earth
This blessed faith decays,
More tender must our love become
More plentiful our praise.

"Worth while a thousand years of life,
To speak one little word,
If only by our faith we own
The Godhead of our Lord." [1]

The biblical teaching concerning man is another vital element in our Christian faith. The conception of human brotherhood in a divine sonship is at a far remove from the thought of the non-Christian world. There is no sense of the sacredness of human life, no sympathy for the fallen. Is it said that the Japanese set an example to the governments of the West by caring for the health of their troops during the Russia-Japan War? They did, and intelligent Japanese freely admit that in doing so they applied to their armies knowledge

[1] Frederick W. Faber.

of disease and its prevention which Christian missionaries first took to Asia. But the object of the Ministry of War in making this particular application of that knowledge was not consideration for the rights of the men in the ranks as human beings but their efficiency as an aggressive force. The Japanese authorities were shrewd enough to realize more fully than any other military leaders had ever realized that sick men cannot fight, that the individual soldier, like his rifle, should be kept in good condition, and that victory is likely to be won by the side that can bring into action the largest proportion of able-bodied men. When the battle opened, no other generals in all history ever hurled their men forward with such disregard of human life. This utter indifference to death is one of the reasons why the Japanese army is, in proportion to its size, the most formidable army in the world. The life of the individual man counts for absolutely nothing in attaining any purpose which the state may seek.

The Chinese are notorious for their callous indifference to human suffering. There are hundreds of thousands of insane in China, but no one manifested any interest in them until the Christian missionary came. Multitudes of the blind groped feebly about, but nobody concerned himself with them until the missionary arrived. In Chefoo I saw a man dying in the street. Hundreds of people were passing and repassing; none stopped, and the man turned his face towards the silent sky and died; and nobody cared. In 1913, General Luk, Governor of the Province of Kwang-si, had his soldiers shoot fifty-three lepers, throw their bodies, some still living, into a trench, saturate them with kerosene oil, and set the awful mass on fire. Wellesley

G. Bailey of Edinburgh vouches for the truthfulness of this almost unbelievable atrocity, and Harry W. Boyd, M. D., vouches for a similar one in another city in Southern China.

In India, P. C. Mozoomdar says: "The idea of brotherhood and equality of mankind before God is not to be found in any of our ancient writings. The idea is decidedly foreign, western, and I think I might say Christian." The Asiatic is not naturally any more cruel than the white man; he is simply callous to suffering, makes little fuss about it in himself and is utterly indifferent to it in others. If he places no value upon the lives of others and neglects a hopelessly ill relative or an undesired girl baby, he puts an end to his own life with equal indifference. Human life, his own included, simply is not valued. Nor let us blame the Asiatic as if he were an exceptional being. If we go far enough back in the history of Europe, we shall find similar callousness. The white man, before he came under the influence of Christianity, was as brutal as any savage, and he still is except where Christianity has changed him.

Jesus was the first person on this planet who ever saw a man. Others had seen man in relations, man in position, man in power. Jesus was the first to see man as man, irrespective of the clothes that he wore, or the position that he occupied, or the wealth that he possessed. He said that His followers were to love their enemies and to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them. "One is your Father, even God, and all ye are brethren."

This teaching concerning man struck at the root of slavery and all injustice. It elevated woman and dis-

solved barriers of caste. It is one of the mightiest altruistic forces in the world to-day. There are twenty thousand fallen women in Shanghai, the wretchedest of slaves. The divine conception of humanity led a few Christian women to open a rescue home for them. Word sped through the underworld that girls who could reach the home would be welcomed and cared for, and ere long it was filled. The news reached the highest official of the city and he took his wife to see this strange thing. As they walked through the building and saw the kindly ministries to those poor outcasts and the marked change in their lives, he exclaimed to his wife: "No one but a Jesus person would do this!" Was there ever a finer tribute to Christian work, ever a truer characterization of it? "No one but a Jesus person would do this"—stoop down to the lowest of the fallen and lift them up in the name and the spirit of Christ.

In innumerable ways the followers of Jesus are exemplifying His teaching by helping the weak, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and seeking the lost. The first hospitals in Asia and Africa were built by missionaries of the Cross; so were the first orphanages, schools for the blind and the deaf and dumb, asylums for lepers and the insane, and a variety of other philanthropic institutions and movements. Christianity makes no exclusive claim to humane sentiment. Kind-hearted people may be found among the adherents of all religions. But it is a historic fact that humane sentiment never became strong enough to prompt men to altruistic effort on a large scale for other races until Christian teaching intensified it. To-day, the thousands of mission hospitals and institutions for the defective classes

all over Asia and Africa are almost wholly dependent for support upon the followers of the Great Physician.

Imperfect yet is the white man's realization of our Lord's teaching. American treatment of the negro and of Asiatic immigrants, the growing bitterness of the struggle between labour and capital, and the elemental passions which have raged in the European War, sorrowfully prove that western nations still have much to learn. But there is profound significance in the general conviction that such manifestations of race prejudice, class strife and ruthless militarism are radically at variance with the teachings of Jesus. Never before in all history has a war been so universally condemned, not because this conflict was more unjustifiable than others, but because the world is beginning to comprehend that the ambitions and jealousies and hatreds, which were the real causes of the war, were fundamentally unchristian. The horrified protest of enlightened mankind was in itself a testimony, not that Christianity had failed, but that men had failed to be Christians in fact as well as in name. Those who have caught the spirit of Jesus should strive more earnestly than ever to make that spirit so pervasive that it will characterize the relations of nations as well as of individuals. If all men are brethren, why should national groups of them be enemies?

Jesus' conception of man! His outlook upon humanity! "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them"—com-patio, to suffer with one,—"because they were distressed," or according to another rendering, "torn and bleeding." Careworn, sorrowing men and women, and the Son of Man grieving over them and entering deeply into their

troubles because He loved them and yearned to help them. This spirit of sympathy with man as man, this catholic recognition of his need, this self-forgetting desire to succour him, is one of the great messages of Christianity to the world. Only where Christ is known do men, as Whittier truly said:

> "Give human nature reverence for the sake
> Of One who bore it, making it Divine
> With the ineffable tenderness of God."

The truth regarding sin is an element in the Christian message that cannot be ignored. This also is a contribution of large value to the world, although it may appear at first glance to be a message of doubtful worth. It is certainly not a pleasant one. But when did the modern science of medicine begin? Was it not when physicians learned to make correct diagnosis of disease? As long as they did not know what the trouble really was or what caused it, epidemics raged unchecked. In like manner, the moral evils that afflict mankind had no cure until the inspired Word told men that these evils were rooted in sin and that any method of treating them that failed to deal with it was utterly futile.

The non-Christian world has no more understanding of sin than it had of smallpox. One of the hardest things that missionaries have had to do is to convey a true conception of it. No word in any non-Christian language expresses the idea of sin in the sense of moral evil, and missionaries have had to do what the disciples of the first century did—take some word or combination of words and fill it with a new meaning. If one were to tell an Asiatic audience that they were

sinners, they would think that he was calling them criminals or charging them with breaking some canon of etiquette. The perfect man is believed to be one who, like the Pharisee of old, punctiliously observes the prescribed rites and ceremonies of the ethnic faiths.

Non-Christian religions have never succeeded in establishing a causal connection between religion and conduct. Some of them have theorized about it; but no one of them has effected it. A man may meet all the requirements of modern Buddhist opinion and yet openly violate the most elementary laws of right living. Japan is the most advanced of non-Christian nations, but Ernest W. Clement, whose reliability will not be questioned by any prudent man, writes that the social evil is "not merely not condemned but actually condoned. In old Japan, the young girl willing to sell herself to a life of shame to relieve the poverty and distress of her parents would be considered virtuous, because filial piety was regarded as a higher virtue than personal chastity. Nor would the parents who accepted such relief be severely condemned, because the welfare of the family was more important than the condition of the individual. And even in modern Japan, in the eyes of the law, it is no crime to visit a licensed house of ill-fame; and visitors to such places hand in their cards and have their names registered just as if they were attending an ordinary public function. Nay more, an ex-president of the Imperial University, and one of the leading philosophers and educators of the day, has come out in public print and affirmed that, from the standpoint of science and philosophy, he can see no evil in prostitution per se. And when such licensed brothels are allowed near Buddhist temples and Shinto

shrines, it would appear as if those cults were really culpable not to protest. Indeed, when the patriotic youth of new Japan, wishing to pay homage at the most famous shrines of Ise, are compelled to reach the spot by passing along a road lined on both sides with legalized brothels, it looks as if official encouragement to impurity was offered, or at least temptation was presented, to the rising generation." [1]

I have seen Buddhist priests coming out of brothels in Tokyo in broad daylight and with no appearance of confusion when they saw themselves observed. I was told that priests often go to such places to receive the offerings of the inmates and to pronounce a blessing upon their nefarious traffic, and that when a new resort of vice is to be opened, it is not uncommon for priests to dignify the occasion by religious ceremonies.

Other Asiatic countries are little if any better. The most obscene things that I saw in two journeys around the world were in the temples of China and India. Confucianism ignores sexual vice, which its adherents deem at most a venial offense. A speaker at The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh said that the Chinese had a consciousness of sin; but Dr. Arthur H. Smith, who followed him, declared that it had taken him twenty-five years to find a Chinese who had it. Mohammedanism puts a premium on lust and cruelty. Brahmanism has no term for chastity as applied to men. The most popular god in India is the god of lust; the next is the god of deviltry; and the third is the god of cruelty. It is not so much that the non-Christian Asiatic is immoral as that he is unmoral. He appears to have no conception of the wrongfulness of licentious-

[1] "Handbook of Modern Japan," pp. 167–168.

ness, and when he is told about it, he usually stares with ill-concealed surprise. Untruthfulness, gambling, and a number of other vices are hardly considered wrong at all. The vilest men and women have idols and shrines in their rooms and pray to them for protection without a suspicion of inconsistency. Some theologians affirm that the sense of sin is universal. I doubt it. Fear of the supernatural, consciousness of need of help may be universal; but not the realization of sin in the Christian meaning of the term.

We do not forget that there is vice in America; but it is not to be found in our churches, nor is it condoned by Christian sentiment. An immoral clergyman is instantly excommunicated. When a gambling hell or brothel is opened, religious ceremonies are not thought of. Vice is known to be contrary to religion. It is banned by the law and must lurk in dark places. One of the most influential statesmen of Great Britain was driven out of public life a few years ago by the discovery that his private life was impure, and the most powerful corporation in the United States forced out its president on account of a domestic scandal. One of the directors remarked: "Any man who fills such a position and disregards the ordinary standards of propriety is sure, sooner or later, to find his position too uncomfortable to stay in." Christians have learned from Jesus Christ the true nature of sin. They know that it is not merely external to a man, a failure to keep a ceremonial rite or custom, but that it is something internal, an evil that is always and everywhere and in all circumstances radically wrong. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were regarded as the most righteous men of their day, were denounced by Christ in

words that cut like whips: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Ye serpents, ye generations of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!"

But can any Christian think of sin in the Scriptural meaning of the word without confusion of face? He knows what it is, and he also knows that it is not extinct within him. Our own country greatly needs a keener perception of sin, a plainer declaration from the pulpit of Christ's teaching regarding it. God forbid that we should ever gloss it over or delude ourselves with the idea that any change in sociological conditions, any intellectual culture, can eradicate the sinful nature of man. Our prayer must be that of the Psalmist: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

It is clear that we have come to another essential element of the Christian's message to the world-salvation. Of what avail to diagnose a disease if there is no remedy for it, to tell men that sin is ruining them, if we are not able to tell of a Saviour from it? Here is the characteristic of our holy religion that most vitally distinguishes it from all other religions. No non-Christian faith knows anything of salvation. Brahmanism and Buddhism can only counsel men to do the best they can for themselves by a life of austerity and self-mortification. Buddhism imagines that the chief evil of life is pain, and its supreme object is to escape it. Christianity believes that the chief evil of life is sin, and its supreme object is to save men from it. Buddhism, therefore, appeals to the feelings, while Christianity appeals to the conscience. Buddhism runs away from life; Christianity transforms it. Confucius

wrote beautiful maxims about righteous conduct, obedience to parents and respect for rulers; but he admitted that unless a Holy One should appear, he saw no prospect that his moral precepts would ever be realized. The founders of the ethnic faiths did not themselves know what was the real trouble with humanity nor how it could be remedied. Even when they spoke of rectitude in speech and action, they could communicate no power to attain it.

In distinction from all these systems, St. Paul defined the Gospel as power;[1] not the power of man, but "the power of God." He used the word δύναμις, which has been almost transliterated in our common speech as "dynamite," and he states both its negative and positive action. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation,"—the stupendous, sin-shattering power of Omnipotence, the result of whose operation is not only the destruction of evil but the accomplishment of the supreme constructive good—"salvation."

It is not easy for us who have long known of this great truth to realize its wondrous meaning. It is too vast for our limited comprehension. We need often to read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and those chapters in the New Testament which tell how this salvation was achieved, to walk in imagination along the "sorrowful way" and stand before the uplifted Cross, and to partake of the solemn sacrament of Holy Communion which commemorates the Lord's giving of Himself for the sins of the world. Never let us obscure the clarity of this message or imagine that there is any substitute for it. Salvation is the transcendent need of humanity. So St. Paul felt. "The Gospel

[1] Romans i. 16.

which I preached," he said; "wherein ye stand," "by which ye are saved"; "the Gospel of your salvation"; "hold it fast"—the Gospel "that Christ died for our sins," "that He hath been raised from the dead,"[1] "that He might redeem us from all iniquity."[2] This is the central, the preëminent message of Christianity to a travailing world. "He will come" is the theme of the Old Testament; and the eyes of those who heard looked forward with wistful yearning. "He has come" is the exultant announcement of the New Testament. "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people, for there is born to you a Saviour."[3] And the men of that generation who received the message "went forth and preached everywhere"[4] "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;"[5] that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."[6] This is the supreme message of the Church. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life."[7]

The essential Christian message to the world concerns not only the earthly existence but the eternal life of the soul. Here, as in some of the other truths that have been noted, Christianity illuminates a realm that other religions had been obliged to leave to mere conjecture. It is interesting to find in all of them some kind of a belief in the continued life of man after death. Food and weapons at the grave of the American Indian, the burial of wives and slaves with the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 1–3, 12, and Eph. i. 13. [2] Titus ii. 14.
[3] Luke ii. 11. [4] Mark xvi. 20. [5] Romans iii. 24.
[6] 1 John ii. 2. [7] John iii. 16.

body of an African chieftain, mummies in Egypt, ancestral worship in China, belief in the transmigration of souls in India, and rites and ceremonies of immemorial antiquity in many other lands, attest the universality of the conviction that death does not end all. Job's question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" is answered in the affirmative, with varying degrees of certainty and dread, by the common voice of humanity. But how? In what circumstances? What kind of earthly life is to be rewarded and what kind punished? To those and kindred questions, non-Christian systems give no satisfactory answer, and most of them make wrong answers a means of frightening their devotees into superstitious observances for the enrichment of the priestly class.

Persian and Babylonian, Greek and Egyptian, regarded the region of the dead as "the pale realm of shade," a joyless existence lightened in part only for a few earnest souls who, like Pindar and Plato, studied the problem of the future life by the dim light of philosophy, feeling themselves impelled by reason to a conclusion regarding which they had no assured knowledge by revelation. The Hindu credited the soul with a life which both antedated and succeeded its incarnation in the body. But his idea of transmigration involved "no continuity of individual self-consciousness and hence no personal immortality in the Christian sense. The doctrine was one of unrelieved gloom."[1] Guatama taught that life is evil, that men should reduce it to its lowest terms on earth, dread its continuance in the world to come, and hope for a distant Nirvana in which it would cease to be conscious at all.

[1] William Adams Brown, "The Christian Hope," p. 46.

Confucius sadly confessed to his disciples that he knew nothing of the state of man beyond the grave. "Imperfectly acquainted with life, how can we know death?" was his reply to a troubled inquirer. Wu Ting Fang, formerly Chinese Minister to the United States, frankly declares that "Confucianism is not a religion in the practical sense of the word," "and that Confucius would be called an agnostic in these days." But his followers could not rest in the silence of ignorance, and proceeded to fill with myriad demons the realm that the "Venerable Teacher" left vacant to their thought. Mohammed pictured a future in which his followers would have unbridled opportunity to gratify their hate and lust; while all animistic religions people the "underworld" with hobgoblins of frightful shape and malignant fury.

The pre-Christian Hebrew made a notable advance upon the teaching of other religions regarding the life after death; and yet even he groped along a path which, while brightening as he advanced, was still far from light. Interesting analogies have been drawn between the Old Testament intimations of immortality and those that are found in the sacred books of other religions. Superficially, some of these analogies are striking. "But," observes Dr. William Adams Brown, "the deep conviction that God had made man in His own image for communion with Himself, that salvation was a moral process involving the transformation of character in individuals as well as the alteration of social conditions, and above all, the central place given self-sacrificing love as the characteristic attribute of God and the bond of union between Him and His creature—this was Israel's own, and it was upon this foundation

that Jesus built His own teaching concerning the future." [1]

And how radiantly clear that teaching, illuminating the darkness of the tomb with a glory not of earth. One cannot realize the significance of Christ's message concerning immortality until he stands amid people who have never heard it. Death, in the non-Christian world, obtrudes itself more than it does in Europe and America. This is partly because of the density of the population, partly because absence of sanitation and superstitious ignorance of the nature of disease increase the death rate, and partly because the methods of mourning and sepulture are more conspicuous. When a Chinese dies, a geomancer is asked to find a lucky spot for the burial. The funeral ceremonies are on an elaborate scale. The grave mound is made conical in shape and its height and the surrounding area are increased in proportion to the importance of the dead. The graves of Confucius and the Ming Emperors are veritable hills in the midst of vast enclosures whose approaches are lined with grotesquely carved stone images. And so the landscape of China is dotted with these conical mounds of the dead, and beside them are pathetic paper animals and morsels of food and little groups of loved ones—Rachels weeping for their children and refusing to be comforted because they are not. As one looks with heavy heart upon the unrelieved woe and desolation of such a scene, he finds new meaning in the tenderly solemn words of the New Testament: "We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose

[1] "The Christian Hope," p. 73.

again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."[1] "Let not your heart be troubled; . . . in my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."[2] Only a Christian poet could have written as Whittier did of

> "The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
> That life is ever lord of death,
> And love can never lose its own."

And only a Tennyson who had drawn his inspiration from the same source could have calmly said, as he thought of the "one clear call" to "put out to sea":

> "For though from out our bourne of time and place
> The flood may bear me far,
> I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
> When I have crossed the bar."

Senator Shelby Moore Cullom wrote in his memoirs of fifty years of public life that he saw no reason to believe in the immortality of the soul. But on his deathbed in January, 1914, at the age of eighty-four, he asked that record be made that his doubts were expressed "when the light was dim"; and he passed away murmuring: "I believe in God, in Christ, in immortality." "When the light was dim!" It is dim everywhere in the world except, as in the chamber of the dying statesman, where "the Light of the world" streams in. When tear-blinded watchers whisper: "The night cometh," the eyes that have been clarified

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13–14. [2] John xiv. 1–2.

by faith look through the murky dimness which obscures our earthly vision and see a glow reddening the eastern sky, then long golden arrows shooting zenithward, then mountain tops aflame with light, darkness swiftly retreating over wide plains and through secluded valleys, until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, and the soul is irradiated with "the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

And we who have caught even a ray of that glory have a message which will end the night of weeping for the millions who dwell where Senator Cullom was "when the light was dim."

This is not a theological treatise, and therefore I do not pretend that I have given a complete list of the essential elements of Christianity or an adequate treatment of any one of them. Each might well have a separate volume, while a comprehensive statement would include a number of other subjects which are also held in common by all evangelical communions. I have merely outlined some of the most fundamental things as they appeared to me against the dark background of the non-Christian world. At home, we come nearest to realizing them when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death." In adversity or illness or bereavement, we think not of the historic episcopate or of the parity of the ministry or of philosophic theories of predestination and free will, but the firmament of our thought is bright with the stars of those luminous truths which are valued alike wherever Christ is loved and served. I do not think lightly of certain convictions regarding which I differ with some of my fellow Christians; but

I prize most those beliefs which I hold in common with them; God our Creator, Sovereign and Father; Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, our Saviour and Lord; the Holy Spirit, the transforming influence of God in human life; the Holy Scriptures, the revealed Word of God; Sin, its guilt and ruin; Repentance, the first duty of man; Salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; Service, the inspiring duty and privilege of every believer; Prayer, through which we have access to God; Fellowship with God in Christ, begun on earth and continued through all eternity; and the Holy Catholic Church, the body of Christ, composed of all those in every land who profess this faith and witness it to the world in worship and sacraments and the works of God for humanity.

Surely these are the essential verities of our holy faith, and as surely they suggest no denominational distinctions. Men may differ in relative emphasis and in form of statement; but differences of this kind are subordinate and do not justify the perpetuation of divisional walls which exaggerate their relative importance and thereby obscure in some degree the transcendent majesty of the central truths that are held in common.

IX

EXPEDIENTS FOR UNITY—ALLIANCES, FEDERATIONS AND TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS

THE desire of Christian workers for closer fellowship and mutual assistance in service, irrespective of denominational lines, has found expression in various forms, some of which have been referred to in other chapters. We take up in this chapter the significant movements which may be roughly grouped under the captions: alliances, federations and territorial divisions.

The premier organization for a long time was The World's Evangelical Alliance. Founded in England in 1846, it was projected as an international and interdenominational society "whose membership was open to Christians of British and foreign nations, whose motto was: 'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus,' whose program of practical work was devotional, missionary, evangelistic and social," and which "desired to promote and maintain religious liberty and to be a centre of international appeal on behalf of persecuted Christians." The universal week of prayer, first proposed by a group of missionaries in India, was organized by the Alliance as an annual event, and its programs for prayer and intercession, translated into many foreign languages and dialects, long guided the devotions of millions of Christians in many lands. "The great

principle for which our Alliance stands," runs an official announcement, "is Christian unity. Its supreme purpose is the practical realization of this unity in the world. Christian unity is not of man, but is one of the first principles of Christ. It is inherent in Christianity. Our aim is to declare, to illustrate, to lead the way to its fuller fruition." The Alliance long exercised a great influence as a unifying agency and men of many different communions rallied to its support as almost the only common platform that was available. It still survives in Great Britain, where it publishes a bimonthly magazine entitled *Evangelical Christendom*, and actively urges its central principle—"that living and essential union which binds true believers together in the fellowship of Christ."

In America, the Alliance has achieved the high success of having powerfully helped to make such a voluntary agency no longer necessary. Stimulated in part by it, the churches themselves have now begun to do what they could not have been induced to do when the Alliance was founded. The National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers, one of the outgrowths of the Evangelical Alliance, called an Inter-Church Conference on Federation to meet in Carnegie Hall, New York, in 1905. Official delegates from thirty denominations convened, organized The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, adopted a constitution and transmitted it to the various denominations with the understanding that approval by two-thirds of them would give it full effect. This approval was secured early in 1908.

The Federal Council, unlike previous movements, describes itself, not as an individual or voluntary agency

or simply an interdenominational fellowship, but as an officially and ecclesiastically constituted body. It is differentiated from other general movements for the manifestation of Christian unity in the fact that it is the coöperation of various denominations for service rather than an attempt to unite them upon definitions of theology and polity. The preamble reads: "In the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches in America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and coöperation among them." Thirty-one communions have entered the Council. Its constitution specifically states that "The Federal Council shall have no authority over the constituent bodies adhering to it; but its province shall be limited to the expression of its counsel and the recommending of a course of action in matters of common interest to the churches, local councils and individual Christians. It has no authority to draw up a creed or form of government or of worship, or in any way to limit the full autonomy of the Christian bodies adhering to it."

The Council meets quadrennially and consists of about four hundred delegates officially elected by the various denominational assemblies or other constituted authorities. Its Executive Committee, of about ninety of these delegates, acts for the Council during the quadrennium between its sessions. The united work undertaken by the Council is indicated by the titles of its Commissions which are: State and Local Federations, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Religious Education, Social Service, Evangelism, Family Life,

Sunday Observance, Temperance, and Peace and Arbitration.

One of the important results of the work during the first quadrennium has been the development of a better understanding between the great bodies in the Council through working together and through the larger view which each has gained of the other's work. The functions of the Council require careful development, on account of the wide variety in ecclesiastical polity among its constituent bodies. It is generally conceded, however, that it should declare the common conscience of the churches upon questions with regard to which the consciousness of Christianity is practically unanimous. This is best illustrated by its declarations on the problems of social order and the moral life of the nation. For example, upon such questions as international peace no concerted action could be taken except by such a comprehensive representative body as the Council. The Council is creating, too, a state of mind which is deepening the sense of fellowship. This it accomplishes by bringing together upon every possible occasion its widely varying elements for consultation and common action.[1]

The Council has been viewed with distrust in some quarters and several of the ecclesiastical bodies which voted to join it did so against the strenuous opposition of some of their members. Some critics object that the Council does little but talk, others that it unduly emphasizes sociological questions, and still others that it might exercise its powers in dangerous ways or fall under the leadership of theologically unsound men.

[1] Epitomized from "A Statement of Plan, Purpose and Work," issued by The Federal Council, December 1, 1913.

Perhaps it will do no harm to have the administration of the Council subjected to such scrutiny. Most people are apt to walk more carefully if they know that sharp eyes are upon them. But surely it is no small thing that within half a dozen years of its organization thirty-one communions, representing about eighty-five per cent. of the Protestant church membership of the United States, have been induced to band themselves together for this kind of Christian service. The mere fact that they have been willing to do this is an event of profound significance irrespective of the particular things that the Council may do. It was wise to move slowly at first; but the movement is now gathering headway and momentum. It is growing in prestige and is already doing much to promote the spirit of unity and coöperation.

Great Britain has a variety of federations and co-operative agencies, chief of which is The National Council of The Free Churches of Great Britain. Organized in 1892, it now represents over nine hundred local councils and every section of the country.

The foreign field presents a long list of federations, some of which have been referred to in other connections. Among other outstanding organizations we may note The Evangelical Union in the Philippine Islands and The Federation of Churches in Japan. The latter was formed in 1911, superseding a former Evangelical Alliance. Begun by representatives of eight communions, its membership has grown until it numbers twenty-four communions and comprises four-fifths of the Protestant Christians of Japan. "The purpose of the Federation is to secure united action for the spread of the Gospel, for increase of friendly relations and of

general interest in Christianity, to insure that the members stand together for the general good when special occasions arise."

The Federation of Christian Churches in India grew out of a conference in Jebbulpore, held in April, 1909, and includes all the Methodist, Presbyterian and South India United Churches, the Missions of the Friends and Disciples of Christ, and the American Marathi Mission. The constitution provides that while "the Federation shall not interfere with the existing creed of any church or society," "the federating churches agree to recognize each other's discipline and to welcome members of other federating churches to Christian fellowship and communion," and that "the object of the Federation shall be to attain a more perfect manifestation of the unity of His disciples for which the Redeemer prayed, by fostering and encouraging the sentiment and practice of union." Provision was also made for provincial councils and a national federal council.

China has numerous federations, such as those in Fukien, Che-kiang, Shantung and West China, and steps have been taken to organize a national one to which provincial councils shall be auxiliary. Korea has The Federal Council of Missions. Africa and Madagascar have several effective federations. Indeed, almost every important mission field has one or more such organizations under various names. As a rule, they are composed of representatives of the various churches and missions in their respective territories, and while they have no ecclesiastical or legislative power, they exert large influence.

Division of territory is another expedient which is being widely adopted to minimize the evils of denomi-

nationalism and secure increased efficiency in service. Such divisions have proved to be very useful in many places. The Home Missions Council of North America has questioned the practicability of this method in the occupancy of new fields at home; but on the foreign mission field the plan has been widely adopted.

The adjustment in the Philippine Islands affords one of the earliest examples of a carefully worked out plan. As soon as Commodore Dewey's victory was announced in 1898, one of the missionary societies in New York sent out a call for a conference of all societies that were contemplating work in the Islands which were thus opened to missionary work. This call recognized the moral and religious responsibilities which were so suddenly devolved upon the American people, declared that it would be unfortunate to have several boards duplicate expenses and introduce elements of rivalry, and that the opportunity was favourable to begin work on right principles of comity so as to secure the most effective distribution of work among the several boards. Response was prompt and hearty and the conference was held in New York, July 13, 1898. Difficulties were foreseen, but all agreed that they should not deter men from trying to do what was best for the cause of Christ. The delegates were not disposed to perpetuate on the foreign field the wasteful blunder which has crowded our American towns with rival congregations, quartering the strength of the churches by quadrupling their number. That conference marked a distinct advance. It was a great thing that, for the first time in history, representatives of various boards, before occupying a new field, sat down fraternally to consider how men and money

could be used to the best advantage and the avoidance of many of the evils of denominationalism. The religious press generally took this view, the New York *Independent* even characterizing the conference "as one of the marked and exceedingly interesting signs of the times."

Widening national interest in the Philippines generated pressure upon an unexpected number of missionary boards to begin work in this newly-opened field, and for a time it looked as if the well-meant plans to avoid overlapping might not achieve the success that had been anticipated. The missionaries, however, took up the idea and gave it local effect by organizing "The Evangelical Union of the Philippines" under a constitution, two of whose articles read as follows:

"It shall be the object of this society to unite all the evangelical forces in the Philippine Islands for the purpose of securing comity and effectiveness in their missionary operations.

"The name 'Iglesia Evangelica' shall be used for the Filipino Churches which shall be raised up, and when necessary the denominational name shall be added in parentheses, *e. g.*, 'Iglesia Evangélical de Malibay (Misión Metodista Ep.).'"

At the same time, the following resolutious regarding division of territory were adopted:

"Whereas, several evangelical missionary societies are entering upon their work in the Philippine Islands, and whereas, the evangelization of these people will be more speedily accomplished by a division of the territory, thus avoiding waste of labour, time and money arising from the occupation of the same districts by more than one society, which has marred the work in other and older fields; therefore:

"Be it *resolved*, That each mission now represented on the field accept the responsibility for the evangelization of certain well defined areas, to be mutually agreed upon, such agreement to be open to revision at the end of three years by the Evangelical Union at its regular meeting."

The distribution finally agreed upon assigned Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians and United Brethren distinct fields, so that in each place only one church is being developed and a united front is presented to the people.

This involved some readjustments. For example, the Evangelical Union assigned to Presbyterians about half of the city of Manila and all that portion of the Island of Luzon south and southeast of Manila, and to Methodists the other half of Manila and several provinces northward. The Presbyterians accordingly turned over to the Methodists some very promising work which they had developed in the region above Manila, while the Methodists in turn relinquished to the Presbyterians their work at Cavité. The spirit in which these transfers were made was finely illustrated in a letter of the beloved Davidson, who was so soon to fill the first missionary grave in the Philippine Islands: "I wanted to keep the provinces in which I had been working so hard, but I confess that I felt that I would be going against the Holy Spirit if I held out."

Another classic instance occurred in northern China. After the destruction of so many mission plants by the Boxer Uprising, Peking missionaries of two communions carefully considered the question of a redistribution of the missionary force with a view to the more effective occupation of the province and the prevention

of duplication. One mission even offered to recommend to its board complete withdrawal, the mission adding: "It means no little sacrifice to sever attachments made in long years of service in fields and among a people whom God has enabled us to lead to Christ; but we feel that a high spirit of loyalty to Christ and His cause, inspiring all concerned, will lead us to set aside personal preferences and attachments, if thereby the greater interests of His Church in China can be conserved." The other mission would not consent to this and urged instead a plan "to readjust boundaries in such a way as to remedy the waste of effort in the crossing of one another's territory." The result was an agreement which assigned to one mission that portion of the city and suburbs north of the Forbidden City, with a population of about two hundred thousand, and three populous counties north and east, and assigned to the other mission equally large and populous sections in a different part of Peking and its adjacent country. A similar arrangement in the Paoting-fu station field gave one mission everything north of a line drawn through the middle of the city and the other mission everything south of that line. The boards concerned not only heartily approved this adjustment, which indeed a secretary had a part in effecting, but they took up the question of like adjustments elsewhere in China. At a conference in New York, September 21, 1900, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "It is the judgment of this conference that the resumption of mission work in those parts of China where it has been interrupted would afford a favourable opportunity for putting into practice some of the principles of mission comity which have been approved by a general

concensus of opinion among missionaries and boards, especially in regard to the overlapping of fields and such work as printing and publishing, higher education and hospital work, and the conference would commend the subject to the favourable consideration and action of the various boards and their missionaries."

An all-China conference of missionaries at Shanghai in the same year voted that, while ports and cities of prefectural rank should not be considered the exclusive field of any one board, as such cities are usually metropolitan centres and strategic bases for wide outlying regions, in other cities it should be the rule not to enter fields where other communions were already established.

Extensive areas in India have been mapped out with careful reference to the avoidance of overlapping. Sections of the country that have been long occupied by several societies present special difficulties, as important interests have been acquired that are not easily disturbed. But the missionaries have faced the problem with frankness and earnestness. One of the adjustments, effected in April, 1913, is thus described by a missionary who had a part in it: "The joint committee met with fear and trembling, for former committees had been able to reach no decision. From the very first, however, a notable feeling of brotherhood was evident and the whole matter was settled most amicably. There had been much individual prayer and the prayers were answered. Owing to the large and efficient staff of the Presbyterian Mission in the three districts of Etah, Mainpuri, and Ferrukabad, the Methodists agreed to give over solidly the whole of this territory to us, and to remove all of their workers,

which number an American missionary and over one hundred Indian workers. It was a work of great grace upon their part, for it meant the giving up of much work that was very dear to their hearts. Our mission in turn promised to buy any Methodist property in these three districts, to give up some thirty-five villages in contiguous districts, and never to enter these districts with our work. Our mission in this transfer solemnly promised to receive between ten thousand and thirteen thousand Methodist baptized Christians as our own and to care for them with God's help to the best of our ability. The meeting ended in prayer and the singing of 'Blest Be the Tie That Binds.' Methodist and Presbyterian parted knowing that it had been a great day for Missions and that in a new sense we were brothers in the work of Christ Jesus our Lord."

Korea, like the Philippines, presents an illustration of territorial division of an entire country. It has been divided into spheres of influence so that each communion has its own distinctive field which other communions do not enter.

In 1913, a deputation composed of three representatives each of The London Missionary Society, The Friends' Foreign Missionary Association, and The Paris Missionary Society, visited Madagascar where they were joined by the Anglican Bishop of the S. P. G. Mission, the Superintendent of the Norwegian Mission, and representatives appointed by The United Lutheran Church of America and The American Lutheran Board of Missions, these seven missions comprising all the non-Roman Catholic communions in Madagascar. The conferences were notable for the spirit of prayer and unity. The entire island was divided into spheres of

responsibility and careful plans were made for coöperative effort in several lines of work.[1]

A conference of secretaries and missionaries of boards having work in Mexico, held in Cincinnati, June 30–July 1, 1914, agreed upon a similar plan for that country. Divisions of territory on substantially the same principle have been made in other fields, and local adjustments are legion.

The limits of our space forbid further illustrations. Readers who desire them may find many in the Report of Commission VIII to The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, and in the annual reports of such organizations as The Foreign Missions Conference of North America, The Federal Council, The Continuation Committee, and the union conferences and committees in China, India, and other fields. A complete catalogue would be of amazing length and would profoundly impress one with the number and significance of these associations and adjustments. The instances that have been cited may serve as illustrations of the purport and scope of this particular method of promoting unity.

Alliances, territorial divisions and all similar coöperative expedients are of limited and temporary value. They are not the goal, but merely steps towards it. As long as the churches cannot get together in a real union, it is highly desirable that they should form the best working arrangements that are practicable under present conditions. Such arrangements, properly planned and carried out, bring the communions into closer contact, develop mutual acquaintance, break down walls of prejudice, and promote efficiency in

[1] Cf. an interesting article, by Dr. Henry T. Hodgkin, on the work of this Deputation, in *The Missionary Review of the World*, June, 1914.

Christian work. They should be encouraged therefore in the fullest measure. But they should not be regarded as substitutes for union or allowed to obscure issues that will have to be squarely faced sooner or later. Exchanges of pulpits, intercommunion, and acceptance of certificates of membership from other denominations are delightful evidences of mutual confidence and good-will; but denominations that have been doing these things for a hundred years have been multiplying their churches in the same communities and are still standing apart to their own injury and that of the common cause of our Lord's work.

Territorial division begs the question of union by postulating the continued existence of rival denominations, which cannot wisely work together and therefore agree to keep out of one another's way. It prevents duplication of effort while such separations exist, uses men and money to better advantage, and keeps sectarian rivalries out of local communities. But it may secure local freedom from sectarianism by sacrificing national unity, and perpetuate denominations in a country where they should be consolidated, keeping Christians geographically divided into denominational bodies which may tend to divergent types and sectional feeling. The Filipinos of Cebu are all in the same church, but they have no contact with the Filipinos of Jaro because they belong to a different denomination. For these among other reasons, the Anglican and Southern Baptist communions seldom deem themselves justified in becoming parties to such arrangements. As long, however, as there are several communions in a given region, and pending a real union, it is far better for them to divide up the territory so that each will

have a clear field, than for all to press into every part of it and thus reproduce the evils which are so generally deplored at home. Territorial adjustment usually prepares the way for union by virtually assuming the equality of churches and the identity of essential teaching. For representatives of different communions to advise a Korean or Chinese convert to join the church within whose geographical area he happens to reside, irrespective of its denominational type, is to abandon the whole basis of sectarianism. If it is right to give him such advice, it is right for the churches concerned to take their own medicine and consolidate themselves. Western churches are sure to realize this sooner or later, and Asiatic Christians will probably assist them to draw the inevitable conclusion.

Let us not think censoriously therefore of devout and catholic-minded men who fear that most of the methods mentioned in this chapter are but makeshifts which cover up what must be uncovered before true unity can be realized. We may believe that they are mistaken and deeply regret their apparent aloofness; but we should not doubt their sincerity or count them opponents because they distinguish between the end that all alike desire and the wisdom of certain methods for attaining it. Personally, I believe that the methods that have been enumerated are powerfully promoting union and will in time issue in it by developing a demand for more than the methods can yield and by creating atmospheric conditions in which sectarianism cannot exist; but I have no quarrel with those who hold a different opinion. It is well to do all we can to abate evils which cannot yet be eradicated; but eradication is our ultimate aim.

X

COÖPERATIVE WORK NOW PRACTICABLE IN EVANGELISM, EDUCATION, MEDICAL WORK, AND PUBLICATIONS

THE new spirit of unity naturally finds active expression in various forms of Christian work which can be jointly undertaken under present conditions without waiting for the organic union of churches. Some of these are not only interesting in themselves but they illustrate both the necessity and the practicability of union and powerfully reënforce the movement towards it.

Union evangelistic services have been conducted for many years in various parts of Great Britain and America. Nearly all of the great revivalists have proclaimed their messages in interdenominational meetings. Finney, Moody, and their more recent successors have done their great work in this way. Every great religious awakening in America has been signalized by the preaching of a common Gospel in union meetings in which denominational lines were forgotten. Similar meetings have been held in various cities of Asia with marked success. China in particular has recently witnessed some remarkable union services. The greatest evangelist that China has produced, the Rev. Ding Li Mei, has deeply stirred vast audiences by his powerful appeals and missionaries of all communions count themselves fortunate when he can be secured to help them.

The union meetings in Hankow, in connection with the triennial meeting of the China Evangelistic Association, mingled the representatives of twenty-five missionary societies in conducting services which were attended by audiences averaging ten thousand persons nightly, about two thousand of whom were students, and the meetings of the Rev. Joseph Goforth in Manchuria were also marked by a complete submergence of denominational lines. Missionaries and churches in Japan planned, in 1913, a three years' evangelistic campaign which took no account of sectarian distinctions. Constantinople Christians, native and foreign, began an aggressive effort in 1913, under the direction of a joint committee, to reach every section of that great city.

Citations of this kind might be multiplied. There is growing recognition of the fact that no single communion can successfully evangelize any great city, to say nothing of a great nation, and that union effort is indispensable. Thus far, the work has had to be done by allies; but those who are doing it are learning what military experts learned long ago that allied forces of different bodies that are only temporarily associated are not equal in efficiency to the same number of men acting as a unit. The converts are learning the same lesson for themselves. A man who has been led to Christ in the atmosphere of a union meeting is not apt to carry a sectarian spirit from it to a denominational church. If a common Gospel could save him, he does not easily see why it should not suffice for him. He wants, too, the fellowship of others who accepted Christ with him, and he rightly believes that the things which separate him from them must be relatively unimpor-

tant. Everywhere Christians are beginning to realize that there is no sectarianism in a genuine effort to save men, and it is not without significance that, in proportion as churches become intense in their evangelistic zeal, they instinctively draw together.

Christian educational institutions offer a wide and comparatively easy field for union. There was indeed opposition at first, on the ground that the chief object of Christian educational work is the training of a ministry and that each communion can best educate its own helpers and should do so in the interest of self-preservation. It was urged also that in a large school there would not be as good opportunity for that close personal contact between missionary and pupil which is so desirable. These difficulties are believed by many missionaries to be more theoretical than practical, or, at any rate, not sufficiently formidable to prevent coöperation. No plan is wholly free from objections and a good end should not be abandoned because difficulties are to be overcome. The objections to union are less grave than those that experience has shown to inhere in a number of weak and struggling institutions whose support requires a ruinous proportion of mission force and funds. Why should there be three denominational high schools in one city when the whole number of pupils in all three could be educated more economically and efficiently in one?

Experience has clearly shown that it is not practicable for a single mission board to maintain a college or a satisfactory middle school on an adequate scale. In rare cases, a wealthy individual may provide for a particular institution; but as a rule the denominational school or college is small, scantily equipped, half-

starved, and doing an inferior grade of educational work. It is to the high honour of missionaries that, in spite of these heavy handicaps, they have achieved such valuable results. They laid the foundations of modern education in non-Christian lands and they were the chief factor in producing the stupendous intellectual revolution which the world is now witnessing. But this very intellectual revolution has inaugurated an era which demands larger educational facilities than most denominational institutions can give, especially as governments have been aroused to the necessities of the new era and are entering the educational field with amply equipped institutions. India is dotted with civil colleges and universities. China has laid out an ambitious educational program which includes a university at each of the provincial capitals with the requisite technical schools and tens of thousands of elementary and middle schools, the number having already exceeded forty-two thousand. Japan has one of the best public school systems in the world culminating in the Imperial University in Tokyo whose annual budget is six hundred and fifty thousand dollars. In such circumstances, the Christian school of to-day must do the best grade of work from a pedagogical view-point and have an adequate equipment and teaching staff or it will be overmatched by non-Christian institutions, lose the primacy which it has hitherto held, and identify Christianity with inferior intellectual standards. Not many more new institutions but a better support for those we already have should be our missionary policy.

This policy requires union schools and colleges. Look for example at Peking, China. Four large and

easily related boards are working there, Methodist, Presbyterian, and English and American Congregationalist. Each must have educational facilities of various kinds. Why should there be four arts colleges for men, four teachers' colleges, four theological seminaries, four medical colleges and four more of each type for women—thirty-two in all? That was the plan in the old days of denominational programs. Very sensibly, the boards and missions now bring their plans into line with the newer and broader ideas. They have therefore united in the development of a single university scheme with one union institution of each type. Can any one reasonably doubt the wisdom of this course, the enormous increase in efficiency within the limits of the expenditure that mission boards can provide?

The same statesmanlike policy is building up union universities in Tsinan-fu, Nanking and Chen-tu in China, and in strategic centres in other Asiatic countries. Union in higher educational work has now become the established policy of most of the leading missionary societies representing many different communions. China alone has about thirty institutions under interdenominational control. The unique circumstances which led the High Church Anglican Mission to enter such a union in Shantung, China, are stated in a separate chapter.

We do not forget the honourable part which the small college has played in the intellectual development of the United States. The tribute to it of the Hon. James Bryce, in his noble volumes on "The American Commonwealth," is eminently just. But young and growing communities, developing their own

institutions in order to give their sons an education which could not be otherwise obtained, are not proper models for mission boards which must ask the constituencies of the home colleges for money to found and equip colleges for foreign countries where there is increasing competition with elaborately equipped government institutions. Even in America, the small college is finding existence more and more difficult. The average boy of a former generation of stage-coach travel had to attend the neighbouring institution, no matter what its facilities, or go without an education. The choice of the boy of to-day is not so limited, for the railway train takes him five hundred miles as quickly and easily as his grandfather travelled fifty, and he therefore seeks the best institution. The small local college, therefore, must enlarge its facilities or go to the wall. The resultant scramble for money is crowding the anterooms of rich men with anxious financial agents and convincing every one that, whatever may have been the former justification, there are now altogether too many colleges in America. Forty colleges in Ohio, thirty-three in Illinois, and twenty-six in Iowa suggest that the waste and inefficiency of duplication are almost as serious in education as in religion. The Christian college which will train men for Christian service is more urgently needed than ever; but modern conditions call for an improvement of plants, faculties, and curricula not only by more liberal support but by consolidating institutions. Halving the number of colleges would double American educational efficiency without materially increasing present expenditure.

Can union educational work be extended to include

theological colleges? It has been so extended in a number of widely separated places and with marked success. We refer to distinctively interdenominational colleges, not undenominational ones. The latter have their sphere and it is an important one. Doubtless there always will be such institutions and doubtless also they will continue to render valuable service to the cause of truth. Under present conditions some things can be done to large advantage by a seminary which is free from ecclesiastical control. But this book advocates interdenominationalism as distinguished from undenominationalism. The author firmly believes that the world is to be saved through the Church, and not by bodies of individual Christians acting independently outside of it. When the missionary society with which he is connected was asked to approve the formation of union theological seminaries and training schools for evangelists in China and Korea, it gave its cordial endorsement subject to the specific and vital condition that the institutions should be managed by boards of directors and trustees elected by the coöperating missions and societies; our society holding that one of the most solemn responsibilities of churches and missions is the preparation of a ministry, and that this responsibility cannot be properly delegated to any body of men whatsoever who are beyond the reach of churches and missions. Granting the soundness and consecration of present management of an independent institution, what guarantee is there for like soundness and consecration in their unknown successors? Are we to trust Christ for the future? Precisely, and as the fullest evidence of this trust, we insist on identification with the Church which is "His Body."

It does not follow that we should regard with suspicion all the interdenominational theological and Bible training schools that now exist. Like the Young Men's Christian Association and the Laymen's Missionary Movement, some of them have been rendered necessary by the divisions of the Church. At home, interdenominational theological seminaries have not yet been deemed practicable, and we should not be surprised therefore that the place that such institutions ought to fill is being taken by undenominational ones. Some of them are doing a high grade of work and are rendering valuable service to the Church at large. If others are developing centrifugal tendencies or are teaching doctrinal peculiarities that make for a new sectarianism, the churches must share the responsibility, for it is their lack of cohesion which creates the special field for the unregulated undenominational school.

On the foreign field, the wiser policy is being followed. There are interdenominational theological seminaries or training schools for Christian workers in Manila (Methodist and Presbyterian), Seoul (Northern and Southern Methodist, Northern, Southern, Australian and Canadian Presbyterian), Peking (English and American Congregational and American Presbyterian), Nanking (Northern and Southern Methodist, Northern and Southern Presbyterian and Disciples), Shantung (English Baptist and American Presbyterian), Bangalore (United Free Church of Scotland, Reformed Presbyterian Church of America, London Missionary Society, American Board, and Wesleyan Missionary Society), and Canton (English and American Congregationalists, American, Canadian and New Zealand Presbyterians, English Wesleyans and United Breth-

ren). In Australia, the Moravians and Presbyterians have agreed on a plan by which the former train missionaries for the mission to the aborigines of North Queensland, and the latter control and support them.

The experiment of union theological instruction, begun about a dozen years ago not without misgivings, has proved to be a signal success, and no difficulties whatever have emerged that are worth mentioning in comparison with the benefits that have accrued. Foreign missionaries have demonstrated that union in theological instruction is entirely practicable.

When the plan was first proposed, a missionary urged that it was impossible as a professor must teach his students what he believes. Some erroneous assumptions which underlie this objection have already been mentioned, but let us face it squarely here on its merits. Christian beliefs may be fairly divided into two classes. The first comprises beliefs in God, in Christ, in the Bible, in sin, repentance, salvation, immortality, and kindred fundamental teachings of Holy Scripture. On these questions, as I have shown elsewhere, there is little difference of opinion between evangelical communions. The second class comprises beliefs regarding a variety of subordinate subjects, such as the mode of baptism, the baptism of infant children of believers, the parity of the ministry, the authorship of certain books in the Bible, the form of church organization, the use of a liturgy or of uninspired hymns in public worship, and a dozen other subjects. One difficulty in the present situation is that many Christians still confuse these two classes. But surely it is not unreasonable to observe a distinction between them. One's convictions regarding a subject in the second class may justly be

strong, and some of these subjects are far from being unimportant. The point here is that all beliefs are not equally important or vital, that those who are agreed on the subjects in the first class should not feel obliged to stand apart because they differ regarding those in the second class, and that any fair-minded minister who is competent to teach at all should be able to teach in a union school.

Take, for example, the question of baptism. Differences on this subject are marked and important. Is it impracticable to handle it in a union theological seminary? There is a wide range of common teaching regarding baptism, such as the spiritual meaning of the rite, the duty and privilege of receiving it, its function as a sacrament of the Church, and related questions. After having covered this extensive ground, why should not the professor explain that Christians have long differed, do now differ, and probably always will differ, as to the mode and subjects of baptism. He can then present the arguments for the views that are held by his own church. Then he should invite a clergyman who holds the opposite view to present it to the students. If one cannot be obtained conveniently, the professor should present that view himself as fairly as he can, and in order to guard against partiality or under statement, he should give the students tracts or books which set forth the other position and advise them to determine for themselves which view they prefer to adopt.

I fail to see why most of the questions at issue between communions cannot be properly taught in this way. Of course, it would not be satisfactory to one who imagines that form and substance are indistin-

guishable, that a particular way of doing a thing is as essential as the thing itself, or that there is no difference between a truth and a specific expression of it. I know one man who is so clearly convinced that the Lord's Supper should be restricted to those who share his peculiar ideas that he partakes of the sacrament alone, sole administrator and participator amid hundreds of devout believers including his own wife. He humbly hopes that the others will be saved and that in heaven they will see the error of their ways; but on earth he feels that he must bear his testimony to the truth as he conceives it even though he does so in voluntary solitude. There is something almost sublime about such fanaticism, exalting one's self as sole judge of the truth, unchurching all the millions of fellow Christians, and calmly subordinating the whole work of the Church of God to the idiosyncrasy of his own mind. Argument with a man of this type is futile. His case is psychological rather than religious. A surgical operation might be considered; but even that would give no relief unless it removed his entire mental machinery and put in new works.

All differences between evangelical Christians cannot be so lightly dismissed. There are still a few questions regarding which it is not yet possible to separate the form and the substance in a way that is satisfactory to large groups of believers. Further time is required for these questions; but I am confident that an adjustment may yet be reached even of them if we seek the mind of Christ.

Medical work presents another attractive opportunity for union effort. Disease is not denominational, and there is no good reason why its treatment should be.

Medicines, surgical instruments, nursing, hygiene and sanitation have no more relation to sectarian tenets than to the fertilization of orchids. It is true that the mission hospital is an integral part of missionary work and that it should be a place where the Great Physician is made known to the souls of men. But no sane missionary presents to sick men anything but the most essential elements of the common Gospel. Union hospitals are already in successful operation in various cities of Asia, and the leading missionary societies have agreed upon the policy of union medical colleges and nurses' training schools, giving adequate equipment to a few institutions at strategic centres and turning a deaf ear to appeals for denominational schools. The best hospital in the Philippine Islands is conducted jointly at Iloilo by Baptists and Presbyterians, and the best medical colleges in China are union institutions. For example, the Medical College in Peking represents The London Missionary Society, The American Presbyterian Mission, The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Peking University (Methodist), The London Medical Missionary Association, and The Church of England Mission. The College at Tsinan-fu represents English Baptists and American Presbyterians, and the College at Nanking The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, American Presbyterian Mission, American Presbyterian Mission South, American Southern Baptist Mission, Foreign Christian Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Mission, and Methodist Episcopal Church South.

In union publications, an encouraging degree of unity has already been achieved. Much of it has come about without conscious effort. Every intelligent

clergyman's library contains commentaries by authors of half a dozen communions. The most zealous Dissenter gratefully accepts the scholarly interpretations of the Anglican Alford, Ellicott and Lightfoot in the preparation of sermons, and the most rigid High Churchman of the Anglican Communion as gladly avails himself of the stores of learning in the volumes of the Scotch Presbyterian Orr and Smith. Tracts and devotional books ignore all lines of separation and the treasures of the Church universal include the rich contributions of Roman Catholics and Lutherans, Quakers and Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists and Episcopalians. As for hymnology, there is absolutely nothing sectarian in any hymn that is worth singing. Every standard hymnal contains hymns of the widest conceivable range of authorship, and a clergyman who preaches a Calvinistic sermon is apt to close the service with a hymn written by a devout Arminian or a pious Roman Catholic. The soul's loftiest aspirations and tenderest experiences have been voiced by saints who forgot, at least while they were singing, everything but that faith and hope which are the common heritage of the people of God of every name.

Denominational publishing houses in Great Britain and America and denominational printing presses on the foreign field, the outgrowth of the necessities of a former generation of sectarian activity, are doing a large interdenominational business. They issue such denominational publications as are still called for, but few of these houses could now live on this part of their business alone. They prosper to-day because, in addition to distinctively denominational necessaries, they make general religious literature and other books and

supplies available at moderate cost to their respective constituencies. The largest and most successful of these denominational publishing establishments is the American Methodist Book Concern, and the major part of its great business is of this kind. Such agencies are denominational in the sense that they are controlled by a particular communion whose needs it is their chief object to serve; but they are far from being sectarian, and their constituencies can secure from them anything and everything that the most catholic-spirited worker may require.

The denominational weekly newspaper finds itself affected by the same evolution. The demand for general religious news and reading matter has become so strong that the paper must satisfy it or be content with an existence which every year becomes more precarious. Within the last few years several religious weeklies which depended upon the denominational appeal have died, and in two instances that came under my observation, the hopeless struggle to maintain them hastened the deaths of their able and devoted editors. Some other papers of a like type are run at a loss by a few supporters who believe that the cause of truth requires their advocacy. The families of former days, that loyally subscribed to their denominational paper and religiously read it from cover to cover, are still numerous in certain sections of the country and are scattered here and there in other sections; but they are no longer numerous enough in any one section or constituency to afford a profitable support for a strictly denominational journal. The religious weekly of the present period is successful in proportion as it serves its constituency in a catholic spirit and, while giving

denominational news and discussing denominational measures, does so in no sectarian or divisive way. It treats its particular communion, not as the Church in comparison with which all other churches are more or less heretical sects, but as an integral part of the Holy Catholic Church throughout all the world, and it gladly and without prejudice opens to its readers the splendid range of interdenominational thought and activity. The weekly paper under denominational auspices which ministers to its constituency in this spirit, which gives its readers the catholic vision and the catholic inspiration, is one of the most influential forces for unity and it has a wider field than ever before. As long as the Church is divided into separate bodies, these bodies can be best cultivated for Christian nurture and activity through separate periodicals, just as they require separate missionary and other agencies. To destroy or cripple the denominational agency for effective work while the denomination continues to exist would be disastrous, for interdenominational papers under present conditions could hardly give religious news in desirable detail or form open channels through which the missionary societies of a given communion could reach their constituencies in an adequate way. The local secular newspaper is consistent with national unity and the denominational weekly paper is consistent with church unity, if, and always if, it takes the broad view of the Kingdom of God and helps to inculcate such conceptions of truth and duty that it will aid its communion in making the largest possible contribution to the Church universal and prepare it for the coming consummation of union towards which so many providences are now pointing.

Has the time come to supplement the denominational weekly with one or two distinctively inter-church religious journals? Editors and publishers are the ones to decide this question. The foreign missionary societies find *The International Review of Missions* and *The Missionary Review of the World* indispensable supplements to their own denominational missionary magazines, not injuring them in the least but mightily helping the common cause. These societies long ago exploded the fallacy that a man is made a more intelligent and liberal supporter of the work of his own church by being kept in ignorance of the work of other churches. They have discovered that he will do far more when he realizes that he is a factor in a world movement. *The Constructive Quarterly* meets a like need in the wide realm of the general faith, work and thought of Christendom. These periodicals are not inter-church, strictly speaking; that is, they are not officially representative of religious bodies and it would not be wise to make them so. Whether it would be practicable to have an inter-church magazine in the near future, and whether it could have sufficient freedom of utterance to give it value, are questions that bristle with difficulties. Meantime, the religious journalist, like the minister of the local church and the secretary of the denominational board, best serves the cause of Christ who does his specific work in a catholic rather than a sectarian spirit.

Catechisms might be deemed beyond the scale of practicable union, but an Anglican missionary bishop did not think so. He needed a catechism for the use of young converts, and he found that missionaries of other communions also needed one. He sensibly con-

cluded that it was unnecessary to have several denominational catechisms, and he therefore called a meeting of all the missionaries in his district and proposed that a committee be appointed to prepare a union catechism, suggesting that everything on which they agreed be put in the body of the catechism and that the subjects on which they disagreed be put in an appendix. When the work was completed, all were impressed by the strength of the catechism and the weakness of the appendix. One is half inclined to suggest the method of modern science and cut out the appendix, although it must be admitted in candour that there are some questions still in dispute which cannot yet be relegated to the operating table. It is a great help in treating them, however, to have them separately classified, as the good bishop suggested.

Large place in the history of interdenominational effort through the printed page must be given to the Bible and Tract Societies. They are to be found in many lands and the number is too great to be listed here. At the head of the list stand The British and Foreign Bible Society and The American Bible Society —great organizations whose work is world wide and whose unifying influence is enormous. They are doing, with marked economy and efficiency, a work for all communions which is indispensable to the propagation of Christianity and which, but for them, the denominations would be obliged to do separately at greatly increased cost. The need of still further unity in Bible translation was voiced by a Chinese minister in Canton who complained to the Rev. James H. Franklin: "In my city, there are five different translations of the Bible, and the differences make a great deal of trouble."

This is a phase of the subject that the Bible Societies cannot always control, for they have no power to prevent any one who chooses from translating the Scriptures and hiring a printer. But the churches and mission boards can and should coöperate with the Bible Societies in doing everything possible to abate such unwise and confusing efforts as the Chinese minister rightly objected to.

The Missionary Education Movement is an example of a good form of interdenominational coöperation in publications. Organized July 18, 1902, it is controlled by a board chosen by the home and foreign missionary societies. It publishes a wide range of missionary literature. Its text-books for mission study classes are of great value, and the facilities of the movement enable it to provide them at a price so low and to push them with such efficiency that sales reach high figures. It is a great thing for the cause of Christ to get hundreds of thousands of people to read carefully prepared books on the various phases and problems of national and world evangelization. More people than ever before know what missionary work is, what are the grounds for it, and what further things should be done. This wider intelligence is sure to yield rich fruitage in coming days.

The secular press offers another inviting field for union Christian effort. Hitherto, most missionary societies and other religious enterprises have limited their propaganda to the weekly religious press and to their own local and denominational reports and pamphlets. Some organizations have discovered that the daily papers are quite willing to print missionary matter if it is properly prepared. Editors have under-

gone a remarkable change of view on this subject. A decade ago they regarded missions with indifference or contempt. To-day they realize that missions represent the world-advance of Christianity, that they have attained the magnitude of a movement of the first order, that they are profoundly affecting the character and development of nations, and that their progress is replete with events of human interest. Some of the mission boards send out a large amount of this material and find that the secular press gladly accepts it. Indeed, a gentleman who made personal inquiries of the editors of three hundred of the leading dailies in the United States reported that, without exception, they were prepared to welcome news items from the missionary societies and that some were willing to pay for them.

Manifestly, this is a splendid opportunity to reach and influence a wide public opinion, and as manifestly its skillful utilization calls for union effort. If societies act independently, information will not be properly distributed among the newspapers of the country, some being swamped with material and others receiving little or none. The matter, too, will seldom be put into shape for use to advantage. The journalistic instinct is rare among missionary secretaries, and editors are too busy to spend time in condensing and recasting a lot of voluminous and ill-arranged "stuff" on subjects regarding which their own technical knowledge is limited. When they do attempt the task, the result is not always satisfactory. One society learned this to its cost when it sent out an "interesting" account of a tender farewell service for outgoing missionaries, only to have it rewritten in the city editor's office so as to bring into prominence the fact that several of the missionaries had

recently been or were about to be married, the article appearing under a head-line caption: "Cupid Busy in Missionary Circles." Let the societies in a given centre unite in establishing a news bureau in charge of a competent man who knows how to put missionary matter into suitable form, and they will find that the average editor will print it with little if any change. The Southern Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Societies have organized such a bureau in Nashville, Tennessee, and already its news items are being published in secular newspapers that have an aggregate circulation of over two million copies.

XI

SOME ORGANIC UNIONS EFFECTED OR PENDING

ALTHOUGH the demand for organic union of churches is comparatively recent, a gratifying number of unions and movements towards union have been already inaugurated. There were indeed occasional consolidations a generation and more ago, like the reunion of the Old and New School Presbyterian Churches in 1870. But it was not until near the beginning of the twentieth century that proposals for union began to multiply rapidly.

One naturally thinks first of unions of the fragments into which most of the denominations are subdivided. Family quarrels often make wide breaches; but there usually come times when shame reënforces other motives for reunion. Many consolidations of this kind are under way in America. Several have been effected and negotiations for others are well advanced. The consolidation of the Presbyterian and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches is an illustration of the former, and illustrations of the latter are the earnest efforts to unite the Presbyterian and the German Reformed Churches. The list of such movements is highly encouraging. The Reformed Church in America and the Reformed Church in the United States have inaugurated a movement to combine. The Northern Baptist Convention and the Free Baptist Conference, in 1911, con-

solidated their general work and recommended organic union to their constituents. The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church are considering the formation of a united Methodism. Growing fellowship between the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., and the United Presbyterian Church of North America, justifies hope that Presbyterians will yet see that "U. S." and "U. S. A." are the same thing, and that the "United" Presbyterians will ere long be ready to do what their name implies. Commissions from the United Brethren and the Methodist Protestant Churches have agreed to combine as the United Protestant Church, subject to the ratification of their General Conferences. The Evangelical Church and the United Evangelical Church are seeking to restore the union between them which existed until less than a generation ago. The Norwegian Lutherans and the United Norwegian Lutherans, known as the Synod, the United Church and the Hague Synod, the General Council and the General Synod, are questioning whether there is any reason why they should stand apart, and whether an attempt should not be made to unite all the Lutheran Synods in America.[1] Europe and European colonies afford equally encouraging illustrations. The Established and United Free Presbyterian Churches of Scotland are seeking union with an earnestness which gives large promise of early success. The Methodists and Wesleyans in New Zealand have already united, and a similar union is under consideration in Australia.

[1] Cf. Report of The Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Commission for 1913 on A World Conference on Faith and Order.

On the foreign mission field, consolidations of this kind have been carried much farther. The Methodist Church in Japan, established in 1907, includes missionaries and Japanese Christians of all branches of Methodism. The Church of Christ in Japan is made up of six Presbyterian and Reformed communions. The English, Canadian and American Anglican Churches in China, Japan and India have been united, and so have the various Lutheran bodies in India and the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in India, China, Korea, Mexico and Brazil.

The list of similar denominational unions could be extended, but these may suffice for present illustrations of the waxing strength of the union movement. The ideal of John the Baptist, as applied to missionary churches, has already been realized by the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions of the Southern Presbyterian Church in the United States, which may be justly proud of the fact that in all its foreign missionary work its native churches are in organic union with other Presbyterian and Reformed bodies wherever those bodies are at work in the same field.

The next step is to unite different denominational groups. In this wider field, notable advances are reported. The Anglican and Presbyterian Churches of Australia have entered into negotiations. Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians in Canada have almost completed plans for organic union. Congregationalists and Disciples of Christ are considering a concordat for bringing their communions closer together. In England, the non-established Churches are gradually approaching union. In Russia, a society has been formed whose purposes have been approved

on the one hand by the Holy Governing Synod of the Russian Church, and on the other by the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, with the object of making the Russian Church and the Church of England each more familiar with the doctrines and practices of the other. In Europe, America, Africa and Japan, the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union is helping to bring the Eastern and Anglican Churches to a better understanding of each other, and is pointing out ways in which they can help isolated members of the several churches. Since the Lambeth Conference in 1908, negotiations have been in progress between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain for the establishment of full intercommunion between the two churches. There seems good reason for hope that this happy result may be attained.

Various unions have been projected on the mission field and in some instances have been consummated.

In Japan, union has had a checkered history. The spirit of coöperation and unity began to manifest itself as early as 1872, when a "General Convention of Protestant Missionaries in Japan" unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"Whereas the Church of Christ is one in Him and the diversities of denominations among Protestants are but accidents which, though not affecting the vital unity of believers, obscure the oneness of the Church in Christendom and much more in Pagan lands, where the history of the divisions cannot be understood; and whereas we, as Protestant missionaries, desire to secure uniformity in our modes and methods of evangelization so as to avoid as far as possible the evil arising from

marked differences; we therefore take this earliest opportunity offered by this Convention to agree that we will use our influence to secure as far as possible identity of name and organization in the native Churches in the formation of which we may be called to assist, that name being as Catholic as the Church of Christ and the organization being that wherein the government of each Church shall be by the ministry and eldership of the same, with the concurrence of the brethren."

Subsequent developments failed to realize all that had been hoped from so promising a beginning, and the Japanese Christians soon showed the lines of denominational cleavage represented by the missionaries who led them. In 1887, the General Conference of Missionaries of the Anglican missions in Japan[1] voted:

"That this United Conference of Missionaries of the Church of England and of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, now assembled in Osaka, wishes to place on record its desire for the establishment in Japan of a Christian Church which, by imposing no non-essential conditions of communion, shall include as many as possible of the Christians of this country. That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the secretaries of the various Christian bodies in Japan with a letter from the chairman requesting them to communicate the same to the foreign members of their missions."

This also led to negotiations which proved fruitless because, in the language of the Committee of the Council of Missions Coöperating with the Church of Christ in Japan: "You on your part cannot confess, and we

[1] S. P. G., C. M. S., and Amer. Epis.

on our part cannot deny, that the Presbyterian Church throughout the world is a branch of the Catholic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ 'abiding in the teaching and fellowship of the Apostles.'"

A more persistent effort to unite the Congregational and Presbyterian groups of Japanese Churches (Nihon Christo Itchi Kyokwai and Nihon Kumiai Kyokwai) was made in 1887–1889, and for a time gave large hope of success. But while the effort was strongly supported by many missionaries and Japanese, it was opposed by some influential Japanese led by Dr. Nishima and also by some of the missionaries, and it received its death-blow when it was actively reënforced by Congregationalists in America who regarded the proposed constitution as an impracticable attempt to unite two mutually exclusive ecclesiastical polities and as endangering that liberty for which Congregationalism stands.

But the movement for unity had too much vitality to die, and in October, 1900, the General Conference of Missionaries in Japan adopted the following resolution: "This Conference of Missionaries, assembled in the city of Tokyo, proclaims its belief that all those who are one with Christ by faith are one body; and it calls upon all those who love the Lord Jesus and His Church in sincerity and truth, to pray and to labour for the full realization of such a corporate oneness as the Master Himself prayed for on that night in which He was betrayed."

This noble declaration was followed by a letter from the Missionary Association of Central Japan, quoting the resolution and calling upon "all in Japan who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" "to pray and to labour" that the larger end may be attained.

Here the matter appears to stand in Japan. The Conference called in connection with the visit of Dr. John R. Mott in 1913 was unable to see that further progress had been made and it noted that "the tendency of Christianity in Japan is in the direction of the maintenance of separate churches, in their organization patterned after those in the West." The next annual volume of "The Christian Movement in Japan" included an article deeply regretting this, and strongly urging continued agitation for union. The end is not yet.

China missionaries and Chinese Christians have been moving towards the union of denominations; but the vastness of the territory and population, the larger number of denominations, and the weaker consciousness of national and religious solidarity have rendered progress slow. Increasing prominence, however, is being given to the subject. Several local unions have been formed and others are projected. The North China Mission of the American Board intimated to the Presbyterian Mission in 1901 a belief that there would be "no inherent difficulty in uniting the membership of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in the Province of Chih-li in one common body." A local union of English Baptists and American Presbyterians, tentatively formed at Tsinan-fu in 1906, worked so well that in 1911 it was made permanent by the following agreement of historic significance:

"I. That there be one united Protestant Church for the whole Tsinan-fu city and suburbs.

"II. That the said Church be allowed the use of our mission chapels in suburbs and city until such a time as it can reasonably be asked to provide its own buildings.

"III. That entrance to the Church shall be by either of the recognized forms of baptism at the option of the candidate, it being understood that baptism by immersion only shall be practiced in property owned by the English Baptist Mission. Members of any evangelical church shall be received on certificate.

"IV. That the Union Church shall be affiliated with the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches in the following manner:

"1. That delegates be sent to Tsinan-fu Presbyterian and Baptist Union with voting powers, provided these bodies are willing so to receive them.

"2. That the spiritual affairs of the Church shall be administered by a Council consisting of the pastor and other church officers and, in addition, two ordained ministers, one appointed by the Tsinan-fu Presbytery and the other by the Baptist Union.

"3. Cases of appeal from the decision of the Union Church, and cases which by their nature are difficult or impossible of adjustment by the Union Church, shall be referred for decision to a commission to be appointed by the Presbytery of Tsinan-fu and the Baptist Union.

"4. That statistics of the Union Church be reported to the Tsinan-fu Presbytery and the Baptist Union."

The Presbyterian Board in New York, January 2, 1912, "joined the Shantung Mission in recording its sense of deep thankfulness to God for the progress of the Union Church in Tsinan-fu and the arrangements for its future which have been so harmoniously consummated."

The Centenary Missionary Conference in Shanghai, in 1907, adopted a resolution which declared: "In planting the Church of Christ on Chinese soil, we desire only to plant one Church under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the Living God, and led by His guiding Spirit. A proposal

for organic union of the churches represented in West China is being actively pushed by an influential committee. The National Council of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of China adopted the following declaration in 1907 :·

"We desire to express to our brethren of all other missions and churches in China our sense of the real unity that underlies our differences, and our earnest desire that all branches of the Church of Christ in China may ultimately come together in loyalty to truth and devotion to our common Lord, in the manifested unity of the body of Christ on earth. Recognizing that existing differences of ecclesiastical order and government and other causes prevent for the present our expressing our unity in the vital doctrines of the Gospel in the form of a common church organization, we who are of the Presbyterian order aim in the meantime at Presbyterian union in no exclusive sense, but as the first step within our power towards drawing together the various branches of the Church. We shall continue to seek, by brotherly coöperation, to unite in sympathy all branches of the Christian Church in China, earnestly praying that all may be led into the unity of the Spirit, that fuller union in work and organization may naturally follow."

The North China Mission of the Presbyterian Board voted, in 1911, "that our Mission assert its belief in the desirability of one Christian Church for China, and assert our determination and desire to coöperate with the Chinese as fully as possible for the accomplishment of this end." A committee was appointed "to work towards this end."

"The China National Conference" in Shanghai, in consultation with Dr. John R. Mott, March 11–14, 1913, included the following among its "Findings":

"As steps towards unity, this Conference urges upon the Churches:

"The uniting of Churches of similar ecclesiastical order planted in China by different missions; the organic union of Churches which already enjoy intercommunion in any particular area, large or small; . . . the formation of a National Council of the Churches in accordance with plans which the Continuation Committee of this Conference shall devise if it deems such a Council necessary; . . . the fresh study by all Christians of the faith and order held by those who differ from them, in order to promote cordial mutual understanding; and the holding of local conferences from time to time for the discussion of the important subject of Christian unity; prayer in public and in private for the whole Church of Christ, with confession of our sins against one another, and intercession for the growth of unity."

India also presents interesting examples of unity. Prominent among them is the South India United Church, which was formed in 1908 by a union of the missionaries and Indian Christians of the Jaffna and Madura Missions of the American Board, the South India District Committee and the Travancore Mission of The London Missionary Society, the Arcot Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church, U. S. A., and the Madras Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. The declared object of the union was "to bind the Churches together into one body with a view to developing a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating Indian Church, which shall present a united living testimony to Christ, and worthily represent to the world the Christian ideal." A constitution was adopted

which included a Confession of Faith and provision for administration of the United Church through local churches, district councils and a General Assembly. Nine councils, about thirty thousand Christians, and a Christian community of over one hundred and fifty thousand are now represented by this Church. In 1914, the Marathi Mission of the American Board was so convinced that "the basis of creed and polity" in the South India United Church "has satisfactorily stood the test of time," that on May 2d it sent a communication to the Western India Mission of the Presbyterian Board proposing union in Western India on the same basis. This communication included the following notable passages:

"In these days of grace, when our Divine Lord's prayer that 'they all may be one' is pressing upon the hearts of multitudes of Christians of most sections of the Christian Church; when the home churches are looking to churches on the mission field for example and inspiration in the matter of Christian unity; when it is constantly repeated in private and in public by many Indian Christian leaders that it is only foreign missionaries who keep Indian Christians and church organizations apart; and when the open lack of unity among Christians is distinctly stated by non-Christians to be a hindrance to their respect for the Lord Jesus Christ and for His truth and power; it seems indisputable that only the most serious considerations could justify the keeping apart from the closest relations of such organizations as the churches of the American Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of Western India. In the case of these two Missions the reasons for union seem to us overwhelmingly strong and urgent. By unanimous consent there is only very great respect and cordiality between all the foreign and Indian members

of both bodies: the two Missions are contiguous, are conducted on almost identical lines, and use the same vernacular. We have reason to think that many, if not almost all, of the officers of our home Boards earnestly desire very close relations between our two bodies. We frankly say that in our opinion it would be desirable to have more of the valuable elements of the Presbyterian polity in the conduct of the Congregational churches connected with our Mission. So we desire organic union between the churches of the two bodies.

"May we not hope and expect that a credal and ecclesiastical basis which has the support of various European, American and Indian Christian Missions and churches in South India will be sufficient to unite the missions and sister churches of the American Presbyterian and Congregational organizations in Western India."

The evangelical churches at work in Chile, South America, have united in a formal declaration of the essential unity of believers and the solidarity of their work, the declaration including a brief creed and statement of common purpose.

This is a very incomplete account of the organic unions that have been effected or that are pending. We have cited them simply as examples of the strength and extent of the movement. A directory of all the present and prospective unions with the barest accompanying outline of explanatory facts would fill many pages, and it would require additions before it could be printed, so rapidly are new unions being formed.

The bases of union naturally differ, as the movements have been inaugurated by a large number of ecclesiastical bodies acting independently. One's opinions of their wisdom therefore will be affected to some extent

by his convictions as to the principles which should be safeguarded. These unions, however, are so numerous, they are to be found in so many and such widely separated places, and they represent such a variety of communions that their cumulative effect is large and profoundly significant. It is clear that if the churches do not speedily find some way to unite as churches, increasing numbers of fragments will split off and unite on their own account with other fragments of the bodies that happen to be nearest to them. We shall recur to this in the next chapter.

XII

THE ANGLICAN PROPOSALS FOR UNITY

IT would be interesting to compile the votes and deliverances on unity which have been made during recent years by many ecclesiastical bodies. The limits of this book do not permit such a compilation here, for the number of such actions is legion. Indeed it is a significant fact that most of the national religious meetings of the last two decades have had the subject upon their dockets in some form or other, and that it has become well-nigh impossible for any one of them to meet without being called upon to pass upon some proposal for union or coöperation either from other communions or from its own constituent organizations. Certain actions of the Anglican Communion are discussed in this chapter partly because this communion has become the storm centre of discussion on organic union, and partly because its proposals have been so specific as to compel consideration.

The Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in 1888 propounded to the Christian world as a basis of union the famous Quadrilateral:

"1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God;

"2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith;

"3. The two Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ministered with unfailing use of Christ's

words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him;

"4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church."

This Quadrilateral, which was reaffirmed in 1897, evoked wide-spread discussion. Many in other communions regarded it as a large contribution to the cause of union and as a fraternal and dignified expression of a reasonable basis on which it might be secured. Others challenged its practicability, while still others construed it merely as a euphemistically worded invitation to "seceding dissenters" to return to the bosom of the "Mother Church." There was general agreement on the first, second and third points. The issue turned on the fourth. What was meant by "the historic episcopate locally adapted"? Anglicans themselves interpreted this phrase in various ways, some High Churchmen giving it a construction which critics in other communions regarded as a confirmation of their misgivings. The discussion led to no definite conclusion, but it gave a powerful impetus to the movement for unity and set earnest men everywhere to thinking more seriously about it.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America has made many deliverances on unity. Almost every General Convention for a generation has given the subject more or less prominent place in its deliberations. In 1853, many of the clergy signed a memorial to the General Convention of that year "praying that steps might be taken to heal the unhappy divisions of Christendom and to more fully develop the

catholic idea of the Church of Christ." In response to this memorial, a commission of bishops was appointed "to confer with the several Christian bodies in our land who were desirous of promoting godly union and concord among all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth." This commission published some suggestions and recommendations, which, like the Lambeth Quadrilateral, resulted in no acceptable plan of union, but like that also advanced the cause by stimulating inquiry and prayer.

Notable among the deliverances of many General Conventions was that of the House of Bishops in 1886, which adopted the following report of a committee on Christian unity of which the Right Rev. A. N. Littlejohn, D. D., Bishop of Long Island, was chairman:

"We, Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in council assembled as bishops in the Church of God, do hereby solemnly declare to all whom it may concern and especially to our fellow Christians of the different communions in this land, who in their several spheres have contended for the religion of Christ:

"1. Our earnest desire that the Saviour's prayer, 'that we all may be one,' may, in its deepest and truest sense, be speedily fulfilled;

"2. That we believe that all who have been duly baptized with water, in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost, are members of the Holy Catholic Church;

"3. That in all things of human ordering or human choice, relating to modes of worship and discipline or to traditional customs, this Church is ready in the spirit of love and humility to forego all preferences of her own;

"4. That this Church does not seek to absorb other communions but rather coöperating with them on the

basis of a common faith and order, to discountenance schism, to heal the wounds of the Body of Christ, and to promote the charity which is the chief of Christian graces and the visible manifestation of Christ to the world.

"But furthermore, we do hereby affirm that the Christian unity now so earnestly desired by the memorialists can be restored only by the return of all Christian communions to the principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of its existence; which principles we believe to be the substantial deposit of Christian faith and order committed by Christ and His Apostles to the Church unto the end of the world, and therefore incapable of compromise or surrender by those who have been ordained to be its stewards and trustees for the common and equal benefit of all men.

"As inherent parts of this sacred deposit and therefore as essential to the restoration of unity among the divided branches of Christendom, we account the following, to wit: (Here followed the Lambeth Quadrilateral.)

"Furthermore, deeply grieved by the sad divisions which affect the Christian Church in our own land, we hereby declare our desire and readiness, so soon as there shall be any authorized response to this declaration, to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian bodies seeking the restoration of the organic unity of the Church, with a view to the earnest study of the conditions under which so priceless a blessing might happily be brought to pass."

The General Convention of 1910 proposed a still more specific and immediate step, a Joint Committee of the two Houses presenting the following remarkable report October 19th:

"Your Committee is of one mind. We believe that the time has now arrived when representatives of the whole family of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, may be

willing to come together for the consideration of questions of Faith and Order. We believe, further, that all Christian communions are in accord with us in our desire to lay aside self-will, and to put on the mind which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We would heed this call of the Spirit of God in all lowliness and with singleness of purpose. We would place ourselves by the side of our fellow Christians, looking not only on our own things but also on the things of others, convinced that our one hope of mutual understanding is in taking personal counsel together in the spirit of love and forbearance. It is our conviction that such a Conference for the purpose of study and discussion, without power to legislate or to adopt resolutions, is the next step towards unity.

"With grief for our aloofness in the past, and for other faults of pride and self-sufficiency, which make for schism; with loyalty to the truth as we see it, and with respect for the convictions of those who differ from us; holding the belief that the beginnings of unity are to be found in the clear statement and full consideration of those things in which we differ, as well as those things in which we are at one, we respectfully submit the following resolution:

"Whereas, there is to-day among all Christian people a growing desire for the fulfillment of our Lord's prayer that all His disciples may be one; that the world may believe that God has sent Him:

"Resolved, The House of Bishops concurring, that a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a Conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a Conference."

This report was "accepted joyfully by the Convention and the resolution contained therein was adopted unanimously."

A strong Commission, headed by the Right Rev. Charles P. Anderson, D. D., Bishop of Chicago, was appointed to carry out this proposal, and on April 20, 1911, it adopted a report of its Committee on Plan and Scope which included the following statement and outline:

"1. The Conference is for the definite purpose of considering those things in which we differ, in the hope that a better understanding of divergent views of Faith and Order will result in a deepened desire for reunion and in official action on the part of the separated communions themselves. It is the business of the Conference, not to take such official action, but to inspire it and prepare the way for it.

"2. All Christian communions are to be asked 'to unite with us in arranging for and conducting the Conference.' We ourselves are to take only preliminary action, and at the earliest moment possible are to act in association with others. Formal association for joint action can be effected only after a sufficient number of commissions shall have been appointed, and sufficient opportunity to appoint such commissions shall have been afforded to all communions, both Catholic and Protestant.

"3. The Conference will have no power to commit any participating communion upon any point.

"Obviously any plan outlined at present can be only tentative. To bring the idea of the Conference more definitely before our minds, it is suggested that, at the proper times, appropriate action be taken along the following lines:

"1. That the prayers of all Christian people be asked for God's blessing upon this undertaking;

"2. That as soon as practicable similar commissions or committees be appointed by Christian communions throughout the world, such commissions or committees to be independent, though coöperating;

"3. That arrangements be made for such joint meetings of such commissions as may be found convenient;

"4. That final plans and arrangements for the World Conference be worked out by an executive body constituted by the several action of such commissions."

The Commission is carrying on an extensive correspondence and has already received sympathetic replies from thirty-one official bodies which have appointed commissions or committees for conference. This is encouraging, although a number of influential communions have not yet acted. In some cases, this is doubtless due to neglect; but in others the delay is caused partly by the fact that large sections of some constituencies are yet only partially awake to the importance of unity, partly because some have misgivings regarding the practicability of such a Conference on Faith and Order or the value of its outcome, and partly because of the persistent suspicion that most Episcopalians do not understand what organic union really involves and that they are actuated by a belief that all that they need to do is graciously to open the door for others to enter the Episcopal Church. This suspicion is strengthened by the attitude of some Anglican clergymen towards other clergymen and their frequent refusal to coöperate with them, even in matters which do not involve ecclesiastical questions at all.

Admitting, as Anglicans themselves freely do, that some of their number have exposed themselves to just criticism, doubts of the sincerity of the proposals do grave injustice to the large-hearted men who are leading the movement for unity and who have given abundant evidence of the catholicity of their spirit and purpose. Unfortunately, the utterances of some ex-

tremists have been widely published in the religious press. Two Anglican weekly papers in particular, one in England and the other in America, teem with communications and editorials which afford effective ammunition for critics in other communions. Other periodicals include occasional contributions which are promptly utilized by the opponents of union. For example, the Rev. Father F. W. Puller, S. S. J. E., has written in *The Church Quarterly Review:* "It would be an awful punishment for our sins, if after preserving the sacred succession amid the confusions of the Reformation, and under the tyranny of the Commonwealth, and during the dead times of the eighteenth century, the Church of England were now in the days of revived life and vigour to despise her birthright, and from a desire to promote an external reunion for which neither we nor our brethren are at present ready, should offer to recognize the validity of ministers created, not by Christ the King, but by uncommissioned men."

"Uncommissioned men!" Any of them who feel inclined to fire a few friendly shots at Father Puller will find plenty of ammunition in the Anglican arsenal without drawing upon their own supply. For example, a leaflet, officially issued by the Joint Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, includes the following:

"Let us confess the sin of schism. Let us confess our part in the sin. What is needed is an honest though humiliating acknowledgment of our part in the making and in the perpetuating of schism. We have much to confess—haughtiness, aloofness, self-satisfaction, false witness against our neighbours. Let us cease confess-

ing other people's sins. We Anglicans have confessed the sins of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants with great ardour and with unstinted fullness. Let them confess their own. It will keep them busy. We are not authorized to do it for them. We are forbidden to judge others and commanded to judge ourselves. Rome's contribution to the sin of schism may have been incalculably great. Protestant contributions may have been incalculably many. But our own skirts are not clean by any means. Please God they and we may see the sinfulness of our sins some day and humbly confess it. Thankful may that church be to which God gives the grace to be the first to cry: Peccavi. Until the churches are convicted of sin, as our Methodist brethren would say, there will be little progress towards the manifestation of unity."

The Bishop of Saskatchewan adds: "Reunion within between the churches is one thing that many pray for, or profess to desire, and yet put the greatest obstacles in the way of it. . . . We shall never be ready for it so long as we exalt the scaffolding above the building, the shell above the kernel, the priest above the prophet, the church life and discipline above the inward and spiritual verities of the Gospel."

There is good reading too in the volume of Bishop Williams of Michigan.[1] Some statements indeed may be challenged by non-Anglicans; but it is very invigorating to follow his argument that the valid religion for to-day is not that which spends its efforts upon establishing a continuity of tradition or an apostolic succession, but the Christianity which meets the needs of an expanding and unifying world by invigorating its

[1] "A Valid Christianity for To-day."

moral and ethical life. "A valid Christianity is to be known not by its roots but by its fruits."

The unwillingness of many Anglicans to be classed as Protestants has excited much adverse comment. Strenuous effort has been made at several General Conventions to have the word Protestant eliminated from the official title of the Church. The chairman of the Commission is reported as having said in an address to his own clergy: "Christians are divided into two classes—Catholic and Protestant. Catholics are divided into three groups—Roman, Eastern and Anglican. Protestants are divided into a larger number of separated organizations, representing various shades of belief and opinion, embracing many who approximate Catholic doctrine and practice at one end, and at the other end many who are doubtfully called either Protestant or Christian." [1]

It is not necessary, however, to place a construction upon such an utterance that is inconsistent with the many irenic utterances from the same source, some of which we have quoted elsewhere. With the name of the Church, other communions are not particularly concerned. None of them, except one very small body, have the word Protestant in their titles, and there is a growing feeling that, while they should not abate an iota of their historic protest against the claims and errors of Rome, the churches of these later days have a far wider message and work than is implied in the word protest. Modern Christianity is positive rather than negative, and puts its heaviest emphasis on constructive things. In so far as Protestant Episcopalians covet a name that expresses the broader con-

[1] Diocesan charge, May 24, 1910.

ception of a church's mission, few in other churches will criticize them. But in so far as the proposal springs from a desire to be distinguished from Protestants, regret will be generally felt. For Anglicans to jeopardize a possible union with the communions that are nearest them in faith and order and blood and language, in the hope that the communion will thereby render itself more acceptable to Roman and Greek Catholics of different races, appears to be of doubtful wisdom. The Roman and Eastern Churches show no signs of being impressed by such a policy. The Vatican rather curtly rejected the overtures that some individual members of the Church of England, headed by Lord Halifax, made to it about a dozen years ago; and the prelates of both Roman and Greek Churches make no secret of their haughty refusal to consider Anglicans as anything else than Protestant heretics of the same general type as Methodists and Presbyterians. The attempt to differentiate the Anglican Communion from Protestantism may endanger union where it is becoming practicable without in the slightest degree hastening it with the rigidly exclusive communions which take their orders from Rome and Petrograd.

"The Kikuyu Incident" is naturally regarded by non-Anglicans as a significant commentary upon the Anglican attitude towards union. The facts of this now historic controversy may be briefly stated. Missionaries in a district of British East Africa, oppressed by the vastness of their field, the comparative paucity of their forces, and the aggressiveness of Mohammedanism, held a conference at Kikuyu June 7, 1913. The participants included missionaries of all the non-Roman Catholic missions in the Protectorate—Church of Eng-

land, Church of Scotland, Africa Inland Mission (American), Friends' Industrial Mission (Quakers), United Methodists, Lutherans, and Seventh Day Adventists. Bishop Willis of Uganda presided and Bishop Peel of Mombasa was prominent in the discussions, both bishops belonging to the Church Missionary Society representing the Low Church Party of the Church of England. The Conference harmoniously adopted the following resolution:

"With a view to ultimate union of the native churches, a federation of missionary societies shall be formed. The basis of federation shall consist in: (1) The loyal acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and practice; of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as a general expression of fundamental Christian belief; and, in particular, belief in the absolute authority of Holy Scriptures as the Word of God; in the Deity of Jesus Christ; and in the atoning death of our Lord as the ground of our forgiveness. (2) Recognition of common membership between the churches in the federation. (3) Regular administration of the two sacraments by outward signs. (4) A common form of church organization."

Plans for a division of territory and a book of common prayer were tentatively decided upon. Baptism by either affusion or immersion was recognized. Provision was made for standardizing probationary conditions for new converts, and the Anglicans agreed to allow ministers of other communions to preach in their churches, though without the privilege of administering the sacraments. The Conference was characterized to a high degree by the spirit of unity and prayer, and the sessions closed with the celebration of the Lord's

Supper in the Scotch Presbyterian Church, at which the two Anglican bishops administered the elements to all the missionaries present. The actions of the Conference were then sent to the mission boards at home for their approval.

Then the storm broke. The Bishop of Zanzibar, a High Churchman of the Universities' Mission, published a vehement protest and sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury formal charges against the two bishops, declaring that the action of his fellow churchman at Kikuyu had repudiated the Catholic Church and the communion of saints, had recognized the equality of the Church of England with the other Protestant bodies represented in the Conference, had "brought us to the parting of the ways that we have so long dreaded and sought to avoid," and indicated a chaotic state which rendered the Church of England unfit for any service in heathen or Mohammedan lands. Clergymen and laymen in Great Britain promptly took up the cudgels on one side or the other, and the controversy waxed hot and furious. The Cambridge *Comment and Criticism* declared: "This action of the present ecclesiastical authorities in Uganda is calculated to do harm to the cause which they desire to further—the cause of Christian unity. In this matter of reunion, there are real problems to be solved, and they cannot be solved by the isolated action of individual bishops. The bishops who took part in the proceedings in Uganda, in their effort to hasten union with other religious bodies, have struck a blow at unity within their own Church." Roman Catholics made no attempt to conceal their gratification over the predicament of the Anglican churchmen, Cardinal Bernard Vaughan of London con-

fidently asserting that it marked the beginning of the end for Anglicanism and that "while the Church of England may be high or low or broad, it will certainly not be a long one." The Archbishop of York feared that unless the issues raised by the Kikuyu communion were wisely handled, Christian unity would be imperilled; and the Bishop of Oxford wrote to *The London Times:* "I feel quite sure that to the great mass of High Churchmen such an open communion seems to involve principles so totally subversive of the Catholic order and doctrine as to be strictly intolerable in the sense that they could not continue in a fellowship which required of them to tolerate the recurrence of such incidents."

The Church Missionary Society, however, expressed its cordial sympathy with the objects of the conference and, subject to the ecclesiastical authorities, its approval of the proposed federation. *The Church Times*, despite some misgivings, viewed "the united communion service at Kikuyu as of gracious promise." *The Spirit of Missions*, the official organ of the Missionary Society of the American Episcopal Church, of which Bishop Arthur S. Lloyd is president, editorially said: "With some of these (the recommendations of the conference) many of us would probably not agree—but that a crisis has arisen which will shake the English Church from corner-stone to spire we decline to believe. . . . It is difficult at this distance and from the American perspective to see where a charge of heresy could be made to lie. . . . That Christian men of any name are justified in seeking a ground where they may conscientiously stand together in their battle for Christ we are profoundly convinced. Of course there are difficulties innumerable about mis-

sionary coöperation, but we get no further by crying heresy when consecrated and well-intentioned men propose a solution which we are not prepared to accept. Surely, the thing which was attempted in Kikuyu is exactly what must precede any better understanding among the divided missionary forces. They must confer; they must suggest, that out of their very mistakes, perhaps, a way may be discovered by which we may march with more solid front to do the business about which the Church was sent."[1]

The Archbishop of Canterbury showed no perturbation, and diplomatically shelved the whole matter until the meeting in the following year of the Consultative Body of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion appointed by the Lambeth Conference to advise with him on matters of large moment. When this Body convened, July 27, 1914, the Archbishop calmly but squarely presented the real issue, saying:

"I desire to obtain the advice of the Consultative Body upon the larger question: Do the provisions proposed by the scheme contravene any principles of the church order for observance which are obligatory upon the bishops, clergy, and lay workers of the Church of England at home and abroad? If so, in what particular? . . . I desire to ask whether, due consideration being given to precedent and all the circumstances of the case, the action of the bishops who arranged and conducted the admittedly abnormal services in question was, in the opinion of the Consultative Body, consistent or inconsistent with the principles accepted by the Church of England. . . .

"It is upon these questions that I now request the advice of the Consultative Body, having in view the

[1] February, 1914.

exercise of my grave responsibilities as Metropolitan. Those responsibilities I shall endeavour to discharge, but the advice I ask for will be a real service. I feel sure that I shall not ask in vain."

When the Consultative Body gave its advice privately to the Archbishop, the European War had broken out, and under the strain of that colossal tragedy, the Archbishop had no time, and perhaps no inclination, to pay further attention to the controversy over the Kikuyu Conference. At any rate, he has made no pronouncement at this writing.

With the wise and moderate Archbishop of Canterbury handling the matter in England, and with such an opinion as we have quoted from a widely representative Anglican periodical in North America, outsiders may wisely refrain from adverse comment upon the incident as illustrative of any alleged narrow spirit of the Anglican Communion. Some of us who are ready for intercommunion, and who welcome it wherever the way is clear, are far from being disposed to have it forced upon churches which feel that a mutually satisfactory basis of intercommunion should be first worked out. We would have gladly joined in that solemn sacramental service at Kikuyu, and our regret that some Anglicans would not have joined in it is tempered by our satisfaction that other Anglicans unhesitatingly participated and that their course has been openly endorsed by a large and influential section of their communion in England and America. Whether, from the view-point of their own Church, the bishops of Uganda and Mombasa were premature in publicly administering the sacraments in such circumstances is a question which that Church is quite competent to decide for itself, and members of

other churches may well leave it there with equanimity.

We thoroughly respect and fully sympathize with those who believe that the ministry is an order of the Church whose right to exercise the holy office and to administer the sacraments should be carefully scrutinized and safeguarded. We cannot admit that every group of Christians, who separate themselves from the historic churches and appoint some of their number to preach to them, are necessarily to be regarded as a Church whose claim to sacramental authority and equality of standing must be recognized as on an equal plane of orderly constitution with that of all other churches. That would be schism gone to seed.

On the other hand, it is quite futile to expect that the great historic communions, which arose in the circumstances described in a former chapter, will ever concede that their fathers were wrong in leaving the Roman Catholic Church on the Continent and the Church of England in Great Britain, and that the ministry, which they solemnly constituted and whose orderliness they have scrupulously preserved, is now to be confessed invalid. Any plan of reunion that demands or implies this is foredoomed to failure. The separations of former centuries occurred because the Continental and English churches were then so dead spiritually and so controlled by unworthy prelates and unregenerate politicians, that their most devout members deemed themselves virtually forced out of them. In some cases, the Methodists for example, they were driven out when they desired to stay in. The Church is not merely an external organization; it is also a spiritual body. When the external organization be-

comes so formal and barren that the spiritual body has to seek a new form in order to retain its vitality, the departure cannot properly be termed a secession from the Church. It would be quite as exact to say that the true Church separated itself from an organization which no longer represented it, just as the Christians of the first century had to separate themselves from the old Jewish Church. Letter and spirit should go together, the former giving expression to the latter. It is always unfortunate when they conflict; but when they do, it does not follow that the spirit is wrong and the letter right. Anglo-Saxons have historically insisted upon their right to depose unjust rulers, and the English have more than once exercised that right by dethroning their kings. In founding new communions, Englishmen did in religion what they did in politics when they drove out James II and enthroned William of Orange in his place.

What really took place in former centuries was not a culpable secession from the Church, but a subdivision of it, inevitable in the circumstances. The children of the Church did not willfully leave a loving mother, but the mother quarrelled with her children and was partly responsible for their departure. If those who thus went out could not carry with them some of the technical facilities which the mother Church counted orderly, it was not wholly their fault. The clergy who participated in the first ordinations of "dissenters" had themselves been regularly ordained in the historic churches, and their successors believe that, if their method was irregular, it was necessarily so and that the irregularity in the circumstances was not vital enough to impair the validity of the act. The Rev. W.

Sanday, D. D., of Oxford University, well says in his volume on "The Primitive Church," that "we may be sure that every ministry under the sun, at least in its individual members, has its defects and is defective. But it is not therefore invalid. God alone knows what accumulation of defects constitutes invalidity." An Anglican bishop informs me that a considerable number of the Episcopalian clergy in the American colonies did not receive their ordination from bishops, and that the validity of their ordination has never been denied by the Anglican Communion. When, therefore, that communion to-day is asked to recognize the validity of ordinations other than those of its own bishops, it is asked to do only what it has already done in the case of some of its own clergy.

It is the Church which gives validity to an ordination, and other communions are not likely to concede that an ordination solemnly administered by a duly appointed body organized as a council or presbytery is less valid than an ordination by one man whom the body has elected. If it is argued that power comes from above and not from below, we reply: Granted; but the Church is not below. The authority of Christ is exercised through the Church, and bishops have that authority only when the Church has delegated it to them. If the Church chooses to exercise its divinely given power directly, as non-episcopal churches do, its acts are none the less binding. The method is different but the principle is the same. It is not the bishop that constitutes the Church; it is the Church that constitutes the bishop. The Church is the channel of divine grace, and the episcopacy only because it is a part of the Church.

We repeat that no one desires the Anglican Church to abandon its convictions as to the sacredness of the sacraments and the divine order of the Church of God. These convictions are as firmly held by several other Churches as they are by the Anglican. Nor does any one demand that proper safeguards for securing a duly consecrated ministry should be broken down. The qualifications for ordination in most of the other communions are quite as stringent as they are in the Anglican. There is general agreement as to the necessity of having a qualified ministry set apart in an orderly way. But any adjustment for the future must not involve a one-sided repudiation of a past situation for which the Anglican Communion must share the responsibility with others.

The question of organic union should therefore be faced, not as a return of penitent children to a mother whom they never should have left, but as a reunion of grown men of equal rights and historic justifications, who see in the clearer light and more Christian spirit of the present day that former occasions for separation no longer exist, at any rate in any such degree as to justify continued division. As soon as other communions are satisfied that the Anglican Church is approaching the question of organic union in this spirit, we believe that they will give prompt and cordial response and that remaining questions will be happily settled in short order.

Meantime, men in other churches may discreetly remember that if some Anglicans assume an intolerant attitude, they are not peculiar in this respect. There are intolerant men in every communion. A lamentably large number of Christians still believe that their par-

ticular sect is the only true Church and that the best way to obtain organic union is for members of other churches to come into their fold. This conviction characterizes many denominations. Indeed one that is so small that most Americans hardly know of its existence publishes a tract which calmly declares that if the ——— Church remains true to her teachings, "she will lead the way for the Church of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven; and the hosts of the Lord and the Lord of hosts will march on to complete and final victory." This reminds one of Horace Greeley's ejaculation on hearing a startling report: "Mighty interesting, if true!"

Christians in England and America who sharply criticize the Anglican for his unwillingness to recognize any ordination but his own seldom realize that their position is rendered easy by the fact that they already recognize the validity of Anglican ordination so that Anglican recognition of their ordination would not disturb their opinions in the least. The two parties would come together in that way by the Anglican doing all the coming. He, however, believes that he is asked to surrender what is to him an essential characteristic of the Church of God; that our Lord intended that His followers should not be loose aggregations of self-constituted and independent units, but that they should constitute as "His Body" a unified, permanent and indivisible Church; and that a ministry ordained in a prescribed way is an indispensable part of the Church without which it could not exist in a Scriptural form nor its sacraments be rightly administered. Grant that, from a non-Anglican view-point, he fails to realize that his conception of the Church, in its fundamental form, is also held by a num-

ber of other communions, notably the Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian, and that he is therefore not insisting upon a distinctive truth but only upon a method of perpetuating it. The fact is that he does sincerely regard the truth and the method as one and inseparable, and that if he were to ask clergymen of other communions to sacrifice anything that they deem equally vital, they would be quite as emphatic in their refusal as they now reproach the Anglican for being. It is easy to insist upon a condition of fellowship which the other fellow has to concede.

It is not yet clear how this problem of ordination can be worked out satisfactorily; but it is clear that it will have to be worked out in such a way as not to ask either party to abandon the essence of its convictions. Many of us who are not Anglicans also have high conceptions of the Church and are far from desiring an organic union on any terms that would be incompatible with the dignity and sacredness of her ministry.

The Anglicans and Presbyterians in Australia tentatively agreed some years ago upon a plan, which the Hon. Seth Low, LL. D., the eminent Episcopal layman of New York, has suggested in America. This plan assumes that it is of no use to argue further about the validity of ordination of men already ordained by the methods of their respective communions, that Anglicans will never admit that ordination is regular unless it is administered by a consecrated bishop, that clergymen of other communions will never concede that their ordinations are invalid, that the best way out of this entanglement is for both parties to accept past ordinations as valid, however irregular former necessities may have compelled the form to be in the estimation

of one party; and that future ordinations be participated in jointly by Anglican bishops and the duly authorized bodies of other communions. It is held that in this way the most formidable obstacle to organic union which now exists would disappear within a generation, as there would then be a ministry whose standing would be generally recognized.

Difficulties inhere in this proposal both from Anglican and non-Anglican view-points. Does it take for granted some factors which require prior settlement? Is it practicable as an operative method? A question may be raised, too, as to the efficacy of the plan as a means of securing organic union. There is no issue on ordination between Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians; but they continue to stand apart, and some of the worst abuses of overlapping and rivalry have occurred in connection with their denominational propaganda. However, obstacles must be removed one by one, and undoubtedly ordination is now a very formidable obstacle between two great classes of communions. An increasing number of thoughtful men do not see any other way to surmount this particular obstacle than the one referred to. It is to be regretted that the plan did not have a trial in Australia. After a mutually satisfactory arrangement had been made, but before it could be put into effect, the Anglican bishops who were parties to it attended the Lambeth Conference of bishops of the Anglican Communion throughout the world, and there encountered such objections that the matter was quietly dropped.

A proposal, akin in some respects to the one just mentioned, emanated from Protestant Episcopalians in Japan. The Rev. William Imbrie, D. D., of Tokyo,

says that several years ago the Rev. Daniel Crosby Greene, D. D., a prominent missionary of the American Board, published an article in *Our Day* in which he said:

"In 1887, a circular was sent by a committee of the Episcopal Convention to the different missions in Japan, asking for a conference with a view to organic union. No formal announcement was made of the general scheme in the minds of the leaders of this movement. It was understood, however, that certain influential Episcopalians were ready to make the Presbyterian system the basis of the conference, but would propose the following modifications:

"(1) That while the general constitution of the Presbyteries should not be interfered with or their authority over the churches disturbed, each Presbytery should have a bishop for its permanent moderator.

"(2) That reordination of the existing non-Episcopal ministry should not be insisted on, save in the cases of candidates for the episcopate.

"(3) That while no objection would be made to the participation of the Presbytery in the ceremony of ordination, the presence and coöperation of the Moderator, *i. e.*, the Bishop, should be regarded as essential to the orderly observance of the rite."

This information was brought to my attention too late to enable me to secure from Japan a copy of the circular, and Dr. Greene has passed away. He was a careful man and would hardly have published such a statement without authority. Nothing apparently came from the inquiry, nor do we know whether the idea of the "influential Episcopalians" referred to would have been endorsed by the Convention or by the responsible Anglican bodies in England and America.

We mention it, therefore, not because it is official, but because of its inherent interest as indicating one path along which some earnest minds have been seeking for a possible method of attaining union.

If the Anglican Communion should find itself able to overcome the objections from its view-point, would other communions be willing to waive their objections for the sake of the end to be attained? Of course I have no authority to answer this question. I can only say for myself that if I were to enter the ministry again, I certainly would not object to having representatives of other communions, including an Anglican bishop, join the Presbytery in the imposition of ordaining hands. I should be thoroughly satisfied with the Presbytery alone, believing that its ordinations could be traced back through centuries of Scotch, English and Continental Presbyterianism to the same sources from which the Anglicans received their ordinations. No episcopal hands could add anything to the sense of solemn responsibility which the hands of a Presbytery would convey to me. If, however, participation in such services would remove any bar to unity that existed in a bishop's mind and he were willing to take the trouble, who am I that I should object to his having the poor privilege of adding his hands to those of the Presbytery upon my humble head? They certainly could not diminish the significance of the service in my mind, and if they increased it in other minds, so much the better.

At any rate, it is easier to suggest objections to the plan proposed by the Australian Bishops and Dr. Low than it is to devise a better one. Something should certainly be done, and if any one can improve upon

Dr. Low's proposal, he has the floor. Certainly, our look should be forward and not backward. The proposed World Conference on Faith and Order may encounter danger if it gives prominence to past causes of separation. An official consideration of differences is a hazardous undertaking. Most of them represent old controversies which, like ancient walls, are now crumbling, while high above them grows the lusty wheat of the coming harvest. Let us confer about the wheat rather than about the walls. Some of the walls will have to be removed, as we have seen; but most of them will soon be so overgrown by the ripening grain that they will be forgotten. As for the rest, there must indeed be "full consideration of those things in which we differ"; but it is doubtful whether there will ever be agreement regarding them. When the Old School and New School Presbyterians came to the conclusion that they ought to reunite, they spent years in fruitlessly debating the causes of separation. Finally, they sensibly decided to stop debating and, without apologies or recantations on either side, recognize the right of both parties to a place in the Church and consolidate on the basis of "the standards pure and simple." Reunion was quickly and harmoniously accomplished on this platform.

Therein lies a lesson for the present. The Christian who stands with his face towards the past reverses the law of perspective and sees diverging lines. The Christian who stands with his face towards the future sees lines converging towards the splendid goal of perfect unity in Christ Jesus. We should not repudiate the past; but we should recognize that the events of recent centuries, which destroyed the early unity of the Church,

have now fulfilled any legitimate purpose that they were originally designed to serve, and that they should no longer prevent us from returning to the ideal of unity which was in the mind of our Lord for His disciples.

XIII

HIGH CHURCH ANGLICANS AND AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANS IN SHANTUNG UNIVERSITY[1]

A SPECIFIC case of coöperation in educational work in China affords a concrete instance which is considered in some quarters to be of interesting experimental value. The parties were The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of the Church of England, and The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The account is given substantially in the form in which it was prepared at the time for the American Presbyterian Mission in Shantung. As the object was to explain why the Presbyterian Board advised its missionaries to withdraw their objection to the admission of the Anglican Mission into the educational union on the terms stated by the Rt. Rev. H. H. Montgomery, D. D., Secretary of the S. P. G., the reader will understand why no attempt is made to argue the question with that Society or to speak for the English Baptist Society, which is also a party to the union.

It is well known that the widest present separation is between the High Church Party in the Anglican Communion and other communions. The two streams of Christian thought which they represent have flowed apart for centuries. They have now begun to touch in

[1] This chapter appeared as an article in *The Constructive Quarterly.*

a practicable coöperative effort in the Arts College of the Shantung Christian University in China. The circumstances were of special interest and led us to ask: If Anglicans and Presbyterians cannot get together in college education in Shantung, what ground is there for believing that they can get together in anything anywhere? The reasons which apply against coöperation in this particular instance are general in their application, and if they are decisive here will be decisive elsewhere. The question, therefore, which confronted the Societies concerned was of unique and perhaps historic significance.

In 1908, the Rt. Rev. Geoffrey D. Iliff, Anglican Bishop of the Shantung Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, intimated a desire to unite with the American Presbyterian and English Baptist Missions in higher educational work as represented by the Arts College of the Shantung Christian University at Wei-hsien. We remember with gratification the cordial spirit which he manifested and the equally cordial spirit in which he was met by the Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries. A mutually satisfactory arrangement was easily and amicably made, in accordance with which Mr. H. S. Cousens, of the S. P. G. Mission, entered the faculty of the College and students from the Anglican Mission were sent to the institution.

The S. P. G. in London wrote to Bishop Iliff that the Society could approve the arrangement only on condition that the Anglican Mission should have a separate hostel, including a dormitory and chapel, for its own students. I well remember the conference which I had with the University Council and Bishop Iliff when I was in Wei-hsien in November, 1909, and the brotherly

candour and good-will which characterized the discussion. No difficulty was experienced in coming to a satisfactory adjustment with that truly catholic Bishop. A few Presbyterians had doubts, but February, 1910, the University Council formally approved the proposal, and the Presbyterian Board, not without misgivings on the part of one or two of its members, but with the clear conviction of a large majority that it was better to have union with the hostel than not to have union at all, took the following action May 16th of that year:

"The Board approved the action of the University Council of the Shantung Christian University, agreeing to the proposal of the Anglican Mission of the S. P. G. to erect a hostel for its students in connection with the Arts College at Wei-hsien; with the understanding that a hostel includes a separate dormitory, chapel and residence for the professor representing that Mission, and the further understanding that the students will take the regular classes in religious subjects, attend the daily morning devotional services, and fully share in the common life of the College as represented by the Literary Societies, the Y. M. C. A. and athletics."

This yielding on the part of the University Council and the Presbyterian Board appeared to remove all difficulties on the field. In the following October, Bishop Montgomery visited Wei-hsien and further conferences were held. His own sense of duty and his fuller knowledge of the views of his Society and its constituents led him to state the conditions of the S. P. G. in stronger terms. In response to a request by the missionaries to put them in writing, he gave them the following statement, dated October 2, 1910:

"The position of the S. P. G. in regard to joint educational enterprises is as follows:

"It is prepared, though with opposition from certain members, to adopt the hostel plan as known in Melbourne, Sydney, Toronto, and other places, interdenominational and not undenominational. Our definition of these two terms is as follows: Undenominational means sinking differences as far as it is possible in order to meet on some common ground, a least common denominator of Christianity. Interdenominational is uniting on a different principle, namely, not desiring to sink any differences but to ask each denomination to come with its full dogmatic system not watered down; on religious subjects no compromises, but to join in general education, in games, etc., while conserving a full church life, and teaching the Faith dogmatically and whole-heartedly; always providing that all who are not in communion with them are treated as worthy of all respect, courtesy and honour.

"On these lines, it would appear that an Anglican hostel at Wei-hsien must be one that develops its own full, daily religious life on quite strong lines; daily worship twice a day in a Chapel properly vested and consecrated, celebrations of Holy Communion on all appointed days whether on week days or Sundays, all the fasts and festivals of the Church's year faithfully kept, but all so arranged that there should be no interference with the educational curriculum of the College. There would be no room for common daily worship on non-Anglican lines, but occasional meetings for prayer would no doubt be arranged profitably on the lines of the students' union. It would appear to be absolutely necessary that there should be a chaplain in Holy Orders.

"Our idea is that these ideals are demanded of the Anglican Church. A truncated Anglicanism we have no use for. Our system is nothing if not dogmatic. Many questions of orders, creeds, etc., are closed for us; ours is a system based on the sacramental basis.

But we are dogmatic on the positive side; we do not indulge in anathemas against others. We give to others the freedom we claim for ourselves.

"A perusal (for the first time) of the resolutions of the Wei-hsien Council seems to show that they really contemplate an alliance on the undenominational basis, with some slight exceptions. They do not contemplate frank and full interdenominationalism. If I may put it humorously and without offense, I think Wei-hsien College is really dogmatically undenominational, and that any deviation from this dogma is painful. In that case I think Wei-hsien, for its own sake, must consider whether it is wise to insert into its system the Anglican pill. It may lead Baptists and others to claim like privileges. On our side, we should welcome this as settling the interdenominational principle; but it seems to me that it is a new principle at Wei-hsien. I have been asked whether common meals break the principle. I am far from saying that it does. At present, I think the Anglican pill would have greater effect if taken at meals.

"We desire to have our full influence on any college we are allied with, but with perfect respect for others.

"In all I have said, I have tried to speak for the S. P. G., and must guard myself from dictating to the Diocese of Shantung. Our influence only comes in because grants are asked from us for students at Wei-hsien. We are not in charge of any diocese and control no diocese. But there are times when we have to say to a diocese with utmost respect: Our supporters would not approve of a grant for such and such a purpose."

Bishop Montgomery afterwards wrote that he had no idea that his memorandum would "become a state paper," that after "a delightful evening with the missionaries at Wei-hsien, at which we spoke most frankly to each other with plenty of fun and laughter about our differences," he was asked "to send them a draft

of his position," and that he did so in the same spirit of genial fellowship in which they had been talking; but that if we would bear this explanation in mind, he was not sorry that the document had gone to our Board. We thoroughly appreciated this, and we were heartily glad that it came as it did, for, as he well said, "it makes things so plain."

His statement, however, considerably upset the Presbyterian Mission, and it passed the following resolution:

"Inasmuch as the statement of Bishop Montgomery, Secretary of the S. P. G., dated at Wei-hsien, October 2, 1910, indicates that the Anglican Mission is not prepared to enter the Arts College on the lines defined by the University Council, January, 1910, we feel that union at this stage is impracticable. We appreciate the clearness and candour of Bishop Montgomery's communication. We also rejoice in the fraternal spirit of Bishop Iliff and of Mr. Cousens, so abundantly manifested in their efforts to effect a union in educational work, and we continue to hope that some way may yet be found to bring about such a consummation."

This action of the Mission, together with a copy of Bishop Montgomery's statement, then came to the Presbyterian Board in New York for review. The Board felt that when Bishop Montgomery's statement was examined leisurely and carefully, the first unpleasant impression was somewhat modified. It became evident that he was under a misapprehension as to what we believed that the union involved; that he imagined that the S. P. G. was expected to compromise its historical position on points which it regarded as vital; and that he felt obliged, in loyalty to his Society and its constituents and in order that future

misunderstanding might be avoided, to state his views in frank and almost aggressive terms. Making due allowance for a certain natural vehemence of expression in the circumstances, was not his essential position that which some stalwart Presbyterians would have insisted upon if the proposal had been to send Presbyterian students to an institution whose large faculty and student body were distinctively High Anglican? Would they not have stipulated that they did not abandon their Presbyterian convictions and that they reserved the right to give their students separate religious instruction? Non-Conformists have such rights at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and Princeton University, while making attendance at Sunday chapel services obligatory, excuses Episcopal students who wish to attend their own service.

Bishop Montgomery was quite right in referring to the American Baptists as a probable instance in point. The difference between Presbyterians and Anglicans is really less fundamental than the difference between Presbyterians and Southern Baptists. If the Missionary Society of the Southern Baptist Convention should accept our cordial invitation to enter the educational union in Shantung, it would undoubtedly do so without changing one iota of its convictions on the points which now prevent its members from recognizing Presbyterian baptism or communing with us in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but no Presbyterian would think of excluding them from the union on that account. Any one can coöperate with those who fully agree with him; there is no merit in that sort of coöperation. But it takes a big soul, a mind and heart pervaded by the Spirit of God, to work with those who

differ with him. This is the sort of coöperation which, in the providence of God, missionaries in Shantung were given the opportunity to demonstrate as practical.

Bishop Montgomery's distinction between the terms "undenominational" and "interdenominational" is in accord with the convictions of multitudes of thoughtful men in all communions. Some of us would not talk of entering a coöperative enterprise with a "full dogmatic system" and of "teaching the faith dogmatically"; but we heartily agree with Bishop Montgomery when he says that we do not want to reduce our convictions to a "least common denominator of Christianity."

Meantime, those of us who are not Anglicans should do that justice to their principles which we expect them to do to ours. The Anglicans have a noble vision of the union of the people of God, a union which is to include all the historic branches of the Christian Church—Protestant, Roman and Greek. For that union they ardently hope and earnestly pray. They recognize as we do the impossibilities involved in the claims and policies of the Vatican and the Holy Synod. But they believe that a time will come when these impossibilities will no longer exist. They firmly hold that the Anglican Church affords the best basis that is now known for the reunion of Christendom. They therefore conceive it to be their sacred duty to preserve that basis inviolate, at least until some better one emerges. They seem unyielding to Non-Conformists because they feel that any impairment of their position to suit a particular communion on one side would jeopardize to that extent the ultimate acceptability of their position to communions on the other side, and that

they have no alternative but to adhere to their Church through good and evil report, confident that in time the scattered and separate groups of Christians will find in that Church either their common point of rally and reunion or a principle of historic continuity that will be an indispensable contribution to the Church of the future.

It may be said that this is simply common sectarianism the world over, that every sect complacently expects to inherit the earth. We are aware, too, that many Non-Conformists feel that some Anglicans hold their position with a superciliousness towards others which is more pharisaic than Christian. But we could name other communions of which these things might also be said, and of which they have been said from the days of John Knox and Cotton Mather down to the "Wee Frees" of modern Scotland and certain Presbyterians and Baptists in America, whom a desire to live at peace with my neighbours prevents me from indicating by name. At any rate, we also long for the union of true believers; and while we may not share the conviction of many Anglicans that it will come on the basis of their Church, we are not prepared to hold aloof from them because they adhere with unflinching fidelity to the Church which they reverently believe is called of God to be the unifying principle of a divided Christendom. Let us rather work with them wherever we can, honouring their loyalty to their faith as we expect them to honour ours, and joyfully believing that the Spirit of God will in His own way and time bring us all to the desired haven of Christian fellowship.

We may remember in this connection that, while Bishop Montgomery and his Society were dealing with questions which they regarded as fundamental, these

questions from our view-point related to method or expediency. Would we have been justified in destroying a union rather than compromise on points which we deemed to be of subordinate importance as compared with the essential verities of our Christian faith? It is our belief in God, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Scriptures, in sin, repentance, salvation, service, and kindred doctrines, which are fundamental to us. When brethren agree with us on these points, why should we refuse to coöperate with them because they differ with us about the orders of the Church?

After all, what was it that we were asked to give up? Nothing. Our own freedom was not to be impaired in the slightest degree. Non-Anglicans would still form about nine-tenths of the faculty and probably more than nine-tenths of the student body. The university life would go on as before. Presbyterians were simply expected to recognize the right of the Anglican professor and students to have separate worship and religious instruction, which they knew would be as loyal to the teachings of God's Word in the things which they count essential as their own instruction would be. This consideration should be thrown into a strong relief. Presbyterians were not asked to give up anything, but merely to receive Anglicans into the College without compromising convictions which they held sacred. We were therefore unwilling to be put in the position of demanding concessions of others which we did not intend to concede for ourselves, unwilling to admit that anything which we counted vital to our faith might be jeopardized if we recognized the right of other loyal servants of God to worship Him in the way which they deemed necessary.

It was objected that the Anglican hostel would have a bad effect upon the students by advertising our differences. But does any one seriously imagine that these differences could be concealed by shutting Anglican students out of the University? That would only advertise them the more widely, and give the Chinese the impression that we are hopelessly divided. The Chinese already know that Christians differ among themselves; what they now need to know is that we do not regard these differences as vital enough to prevent coöperation.

It is easy to exaggerate the harmful consequences of union on such terms. Would one or two Anglican professors in a faculty of a score or more, and a few dozen Chinese youths, who probably care little about the point at issue and who form a small fraction of a student body of several hundred men, be likely to exert a large divisive influence? The whole current of university life would be against such an effort if made. If there was any risk, it was on their side, not ours. Bishop Montgomery unhesitatingly avowed his readiness to take that risk, and confidently predicted that "the little Anglican pill may have great purgative results." But we were not prepared to admit that our own position was so weak and the force of our Christian conception so slight that we dared not enter into coöperative university relations with a sister Society, even though it could send a considerably larger number of students than we knew that it would send. The resultant separations would not be as wide as those which are caused by fraternities in America and the social clubs which split into rival cliques the students of institutions which do not permit fraternities.

An analysis of Bishop Montgomery's statement shows no material change from the position explained by Bishop Iliff in the conference at Wei-hsien in November, 1909, and approved by the Presbyterian Board May 16, 1910; with, perhaps, the exception that the instruction in religious subjects should be made by the Anglican member of the faculty. This exception is a minor matter. What we deemed essential was that religious instruction should be given by a Christian professor. It was a mere detail whether the Anglican students got it separately or in the general classes. The vital thing was that they got it. We naturally preferred that all students should be taught together; but surely this point was not important enough to justify the severance of relations. If the American Baptists shall enter the union, as we hope that they will, they will almost certainly feel, as Bishop Montgomery suggests, that their students must have some special religious instruction which they alone can give.

Bishop Montgomery's references to "fasts and festivals of the Church's year," "a chapel properly consecrated and vested," "a chaplain in Holy Orders," and "celebrations of the Holy Communion on all appointed days," sound portentously controversial to men of Puritan ancestry. But a saving sense of humour will enable us to remember that Presbyterians observe such "fasts and festivals" as Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and, in an increasing number of places, Good Friday, on which day business in New York is now generally suspended, while New England makes it a legal holiday. "A chapel properly consecrated" is simply a dedicated church. "Vestments" have been officially adopted for the clergy in the chapel of our

most conservative Presbyterian theological seminary at Princeton, New Jersey, and a large and rapidly growing number of Presbyterian ministers wear them every Sunday. "A chaplain in Holy Orders" means an ordained clergyman of the Church of England who, from our view-point, has the same status as our own ordained men who can trace their ecclesiastical lineage back through the Church of Scotland to the same source as the Anglicans trace theirs. "Celebrations of the Holy Communion" are observances of the Lord's Supper, which we count quite as holy as the Anglicans do. The frequency with which this Sacrament should be observed is a question on which Presbyterians themselves widely differ, historic practice ranging all the way from once a month to once a year. We need not become excited because Bishop Montgomery applies the terminology of the Church of England to ideas and observances that are more or less common in all the Churches. If he put a different significance into some of them, we continue free to practice our own interpretation. His statement that "ours is a system based on the sacramental basis" indicates a principle which apparently works out into wider differences; but, as I have intimated elsewhere, these differences are as wide within the Anglican Communion as they are outside of it. If they are compatible with organic union in a Church, they are certainly not incompatible with cooperation with Presbyterians in a college which does not teach theology or ecclesiology.

We should remember at this point that under the rules of the Church of England and the S. P. G., the operation of an educational union does not rest with the Society in London but with the local Bishop. Bishop

Montgomery frankly admits this in the closing paragraph of his statement, distinctly stating that his "influence only comes in because grants are asked from us for students" and that "we are not in charge of any diocese and control no diocese." Whatever the theory, the practice is determined by the Bishop and his appointee on the faculty. Every one in China knows what kind of a man Bishop Iliff is. Many of our missionaries have spoken in the highest terms of the breadth and warmth of his Christian spirit and the great satisfaction which they found in coöperating with him. It is true that a change of bishops might bring in a man of narrower outlook; but if experience should ever prove disastrous, an article in the Basis of Union provides an easy way of ending it on due notice being given by either party. Bishop Montgomery's statement did not indicate the slightest desire to press the matter, and probably the arrangement could be cancelled at almost any time by our purchase of the Anglican building. Meantime, we did not need to make up our minds in advance that the plan would not work. It could at least be tried.

This chapter should not be interpreted as a criticism upon missionaries who believed that a union on Bishop Montgomery's terms was impracticable. So far from being sectarian, the very essence of their position was a desire to keep the University free from sectarianism. Many of them voted as they did with deep grief, for they were eager to have all the Missions in the Province unite in the work of the University. The first impression which the reading of Bishop Montgomery's statement made upon us was probably about the same as the first impression in Shantung. This is a very dif-

ficult and complicated question, and there are undoubtedly two sides to it.

Those, however, who object to the Anglican position may discreetly remember that such an objection may work both ways. It will hardly do for us to protest against the Anglicans doing what they desire, while we reserve our right to do what we please. Bishop Montgomery's statement indicates his belief that the shoe was on our foot, for he said that he thought that the College was "really dogmatically undenominational." If we did not relinquish any of our convictions, but asked him to relinquish some of his, what was the advantage of our position? At any rate, if the effort to coöperate was to fail, we were not disposed to have Presbyterians responsible for the disaster. Even if others did seem to be aggressively sectarian, was that any reason why we should be? We could try to be catholic Christians ourselves, no matter what others might do; and if the attempt to work together did not succeed, let the full responsibility rest elsewhere.

The alternative of admitting the Anglicans to the University on their own terms would have been that this first practical effort to unite the High Church Anglicans and Presbyterians on any kind of a platform would have failed; that Chinese students of the Anglican Mission would have been shut out of the University; that a principle would have been adopted which would probably exclude some other communions; that instead of developing a University which could exert a united and commanding Christian leadership in Shantung, we would have seen its natural constituency limited and perhaps divided; and that we would have rested under the implication that Presbyterians insist

on full rights for themselves but are not willing to work with others who insist upon their rights.

We do not wish to be understood as defending the position of the S. P. G. It is not our place to do that and we have no inclination to attempt it anyway. If it be said that this presentation of the case is one-sided, that Presbyterians were urged to yield and Anglicans apparently justified in rigidly adhering to their position, we reply that it was "a condition that confronted us and not a theory," a concrete question whether Presbyterians should consent to coöperation in educational work on certain terms, or have no coöperation at all. We had to deal with the matter as Presbyterians addressing Presbyterians. It was therefore incumbent upon the Board to go as far as it could without sacrificing any essential conviction. This chapter is designed to explain what we did and why we did it. How far the S. P. G. ought to have gone towards us was a separate question which lay beyond our jurisdiction. If that is to be discussed, an Anglican should discuss it.

But we were not thinking primarily of the S. P. G., but of coöperation and the promotion of unity, and they appeared to us to be far more important to the cause of Christ than hostels and vestments. We were not unmindful that it might be objected that coöperation and unity were precisely what Bishop Montgomery's statement rendered impossible; but we felt that this should not be assumed in advance.

Governed by these considerations and with the cordial concurrence of my executive colleagues, I presented the following minute to the Presbyterian Board, December 19, 1910, and it was adopted with only one dissenting vote:

"Consideration was given to a written statement, dated October 2, 1910, by the Rt. Rev. H. H. Montgomery, D. D., Secretary of the S. P. G., London, England, and then in Wei-hsien, China, in conference with our missionaries regarding the terms on which the S. P. G. could unite with other Societies of Foreign Missions in the Shantung Christian University. His statement was read to the Board and also the action of the West Shantung Mission which deemed union on such terms impracticable.

"The Board does not understand that when a Society unites with other Societies in educational work, such union necessarily implies any surrender or compromise of the essential principles and methods of the Church which the Society represents. We are none the less Presbyterians because we heartily coöperate with our fellow Christians of other communions. As the foreign missionary agency of the Presbyterian Church, the Board has neither the power nor the inclination to change the essential tenets of that Church. We cordially recognize that union in such an enterprise should be on terms large enough to include reasonable variations and not on terms so narrow as to exclude or belittle what any coöperating Society deems vital. The Board holds, nevertheless, that as Christian men confront the tremendous problems of the non-Christian world, they should feel that the questions of faith and practice on which they are in substantial agreement, and for the inculcation of which they are in China, are far more important and fundamental than the questions on which they differ. The Board regrets that Bishop Montgomery deemed it his duty to insist so strongly on these differences; but it unhesitatingly believes that his object in doing so was to guard in the spirit of Christian candour against what he feared might be a misunderstanding of the historic position of the S. P. G., and not to intimate any disposition to enter the educational union in a divisive spirit. We are the more encouraged to take this view because of the fact that union in

higher education with the Anglican Mission in Shantung had been in practical operation for two years, though as yet without the separate hostel, and that by the cordial testimony of our missionaries, Anglicans, Baptists and Presbyterians have worked together in perfect harmony for the main purpose for which the College exists, and without any sacrifice of the convictions on other matters for which the different communions stand.

"The desire of the Anglicans to have a dormitory for their students and to cultivate their religious life in their own chapel does not impress the Board as a sufficient reason for not welcoming them to a place in the University; especially as the S. P. G. proposes to bear the expense which its plans involve and as its students are to form an integral part of the common student body in recitations, literary societies, athletic exercises, meals, social life and occasional meetings for prayer on the lines of the Students' Union. We are not asked to modify our convictions or our practice in any particular. The University life goes on as before. We have the same freedom to cultivate the religious life of our students as the Anglicans have to cultivate the religious life of theirs. Admitting Non-Conformists with their separate chapels to Oxford University did not make trouble there, and we are unable to see why admitting Anglicans with their separate chapel to the Shantung Christian University should make trouble in China. The Board not only favours the coming of the Anglicans, but it is cordially prepared to favour the admission into the University of the American Southern Baptists on the same terms, if the Baptists desire them. Union in educational work and ecclesiastical uniformity are not synonymous. The Board would deem it a calamity and a grave departure from the best traditions of the Presbyterian Church if we were to close the doors of our University to Christian brethren for no other reason than that they wish at their own expense, in their own way, and in courteous recognition of the rights

of others, to conserve the teachings which they deem sacred.

"The Board therefore reaffirms its action of May 16th, approving the entrance of the Anglican Mission to the University, and it expresses its entire confidence that the Presbyterian missionaries in Shantung will be willing to give the union a fair trial, and to avoid anything which could lay at their door responsibility for the failure of an effort which, however imperfect in some respects, is nevertheless the only practicable way at present of making a beginning in coöperative relations which may have larger historic significance than we now comprehend. The spirit of Christ in all hearts can make almost any basis of union a blessing to China and to the world."

It may be that our geographical distance from the region of operations, while enabling us to view the question in some broader aspects and with a more adequate recognition of the gravity of the issues involved, may at the same time lessen our ability to appreciate the local difficulties which must be adjusted on the field. We realize that it was easier for us in New York to approve of such a union than it was for the missionaries in China to carry it out. But we well knew the depth and earnestness of their Christian spirit. We were sure that they were most cordially ready to do everything that could be done to make the union effective, and that even those who were most seriously troubled by its terms were at least willing to give it a fair trial.

The result has abundantly justified our faith both in the plan and in the missionaries who were to carry it into effect. The union has been in successful and happy operation ever since. If we cannot get together on all points, we are at least getting together on

some; and perhaps others will develop from them. Enough has already been accomplished to prove conclusively that American Presbyterians, English Baptists and High Church Anglicans can harmoniously and effectively coöperate in educational work without any sacrifice of principle, where the men concerned have the mind of Christ. Each of these communions is carrying into the University "its full dogmatic system," and the result is not discord but large and catholic concord.

The experience should be helpful elsewhere. The cooperation which we all desire will never spring full-orbed into being. A beginning must be made, small perhaps and very imperfect; but when an opportunity opens to make that beginning, let us meet it with deep solemnity and a willingness to make any adjustment which does not involve conscious disloyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ. He who prayed with unutterable yearning that His disciples might "be one" will surely help them in any effort to walk together in loving service in His Holy Name.

XIV

MISSIONARY SOCIETIES AND UNITY

WE have had occasion in other chapters to refer to the relation of the foreign missionary enterprise to the growing movement towards unity, but there are some aspects of this relationship at the home base which require more detailed consideration. Missionary workers have a special responsibility for aiding the movement to secure Christian unity. At home, venerable traditions, valued associations, and denominational *esprit de corps* have hardened the lines of separation. There is, too, the tremendous power of inertia, the natural tendency of the human mind to cling to familiar things especially when they have come down through generations of ancestors. It is difficult to change attitudes that have become fixed and historic. We must reckon also with that class of men, to be found in every relation of life, who instinctively resent any effort to change the established order, or who find in such an effort an opportunity to exploit themselves as defenders of the ark, or who imagine that any proposal which affects their denominational existence jeopardizes "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

It has been ever thus. A godly Ohio clergyman a generation ago declared that eating meat on the Sabbath was a violation of Holy Scripture. The anti-slavery movement was vehemently opposed as contrary

to the Bible. Total abstinence has been decried as a reflection upon Christ at the Cana wedding feast. The passions of civil strife were kept alive for years after the American Civil War by candidates for office who deemed it to their political advantage vociferously to fight over on the hustings issues which braver men had fought to a finish on the battle-field—waving "the bloody shirt" which had been worn by soldiers who were now saying: "Let us have peace." An old New England deacon prevented the purchase of a bell rope for his church by insisting that ever since the erection of the building the bell had been rung by a man who climbed the belfry stairs, and that a method that was good enough for the fathers was good enough for their descendents.

We have seen how the spirit of denominational loyalty has been weakened in some minds and destroyed in others, so that the whole position of the denominationalist has become precarious. But we should not blind ourselves to the fact that there are still many Christians with whom the denominational shibboleth has magical power, and that while myriads have risen above denominational barriers, other myriads continue to live below them so that when any particular proposal is made which seems to transcend those barriers, there is an immediate outcry on the part of the alarmed brethren who live within the lower enclosures. It is said that there are belated Americans in some backwoods districts who do not yet know that Andrew Jackson is dead; and there are Christians, both in pulpit and pew, who are living to-day in the sectarian atmosphere of a former generation. Their numbers are diminishing, but they are still numerous enough to be-

set proposals of unity with obstructions that seriously hinder progress.

It would be as absurd as it would be unjust to claim that all opponents of church union can be classified in this fashion. Every one knows that many intelligent and devout men sincerely believe that fraternal coöperation between denominations would be better than organic union and fulfill quite as well all requirements of our Lord's teaching, and that others, who really desire union, are convinced that it is impracticable under present conditions and will be for generations to come. But these strong and open-minded men receive substantial reënforcement from the types of mind that have been mentioned.

Candour calls for the admission that the advocates of union are also reënforced by men who have no real earnestness of conviction, who care little for any particular doctrines, and who, like the Athenians of St. Paul's day, are attracted to the cause of union because it is "some new thing." There is a kind of comprehension which has breadth without depth, like the river beside which I am writing this chapter—a mile wide and three feet deep with a mud bottom at that. It is easier, however, changing the figure, to stand still than to go forward, especially when one cannot move without cutting ties of association; and this undoubted fact hampers the union movement at home.

On the foreign field, conditions are newer and more plastic. Denominational lines have not had so much time to harden. Missionaries who are confronted, not by rival missionaries of other denominations, but by an enormous mass of heathenism, instinctively turn to the most vital elements of the Christian faith. Relations

with neighbouring missionaries of other communions are often closer than with a home church on the other side of the world. It is natural therefore to coöperate with them on the subjects on which there is agreement, which usually happen to be the ones that chiefly concern the exigencies of the work. In these circumstances, the missionary body as a whole has developed a unity that is considerably in advance of that which prevails in the lands from which the missionaries came.

The missionary is hindered or helped in this respect by the views which are held by his home constituency as to the object of the missionary enterprise. One view is that this object is to extend the denomination throughout the world—its distinctive tenets and ecclesiastical forms. The other view is that the object is to communicate the essential truths of New Testament teaching without special reference to a denominational interpretation, leaving the churches in the mission field to develop their own creeds and forms of organization.

The first view was more common a generation ago than it is to-day; but it is still held by some devoted men who generously support the missionary work of their respective churches. It is given clear expression by the Roman Catholic Rev. F. Schwager, S. V. D., who writes: "Roman Catholics are firmly convinced that Christ Himself established the apostolic teaching office in the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pope at its head as the shepherd of the whole flock of Jesus (John xxi. 15–17) on behalf of the entire human race, and that He gave to this Church alone the right and the duty of proclaiming the Gospel to the whole world. If they were not to act in accordance with this conviction, they would be guilty of a grievous sin against

their own conscience, and therefore also against our common divine Lord." [1]

The second view is held by increasing numbers of missionaries abroad and missionary supporters at home, and is more and more coming to be a characteristic of the foreign missionary movement as a whole. To assert that the object of missions is to extend the denomination is to raise the question: Which denomination? Which one or ones of the one hundred and sixty-four in the United States alone and the scores of others in Europe? If one is agreed upon, which subdivision of it; for the antagonism between two branches of a given group is often sharper than between totally different groups. Picture the religious chaos on the foreign field if these home divisions are to be emphasized. I cannot believe that it is any necessary part of our foreign missionary obligation to perpetuate in Asia and Africa the sectarian divisions of Europe and America. Why should the Christians of Korea be divided into Northern Presbyterians and Southern Presbyterians because a civil war was waged in the United States half a century ago? Why should the Christians of India be labelled English Wesleyans, German Lutherans, and American Baptists? Imagine a Dutch Reformed Chinese! Surely this would be sectarianism gone to seed, if indeed it would not approximate one of the sins for which Christ rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees.

A prominent clergyman told me that he doubted the wisdom of a union of the Asiatic churches as he feared that it would weaken the sense of responsibility of the home churches to support the work financially. He thought that a denomination in America would take a

[1] Article in *The International Review of Missions*, July, 1914.

deeper interest in a comparatively small native church wholly dependent upon it than it would in an indeterminate part of a larger church. Must, then, the unity of the churches of Asia be sacrificed to the divisions of American and European churches? Are they to be kept small and weak in order that we may retain our control over them? Shall we buy their dependence with foreign gold, weaken their self-reliance and nullify our hope of developing their self-support? The majority of American missionary constituencies with which I am familiar take no such position. On the contrary, they do not want their boards to conduct a sectarian propaganda and would diminish their gifts if the boards did conduct it. Where donors do demand such a propaganda as a condition of support and cannot be persuaded to take a broader view, it would be far better for the cause of Christ for a board to reply: "Thy money perish with thee!" than to accept gifts on terms which would rivet western sectarian chains on the limbs of the growing eastern churches. The Christians of Asia should be given a fair chance to develop a unity large enough to comprehend these various forms. If they must be divided, let them separate later along their own lines of cleavage, not on lines arbitrarily extended from western nations.

It is significant that the foreign missionary platform is the only one thus far on which all evangelical communions have been able to unite, the one interdenominational platform as distinguished from undenominational ones. Missionary workers should be thankful for this, and yet they should be solemnized by the responsibility which it imposes. The spirit of unity was manifested in various conferences and field organiza-

tions in Asia before it found expression in Europe and America, and when that spirit began to demand expression at home, it was in conferences on foreign missions.

The future historian may attach importance to the year 1854, as the date of the first interdenominational conferences of missionary societies. One was held in New York in May of that year and was attended by one hundred and fifty persons. The second was held in London in October and included members of most of the missionary societies of Great Britain. March, 1860, saw the third conference in Liverpool, where one hundred and twenty-six missionary workers assembled. In October, 1878, the fourth conference met in London. The membership, one hundred and fifty-eight, was only a little larger than that of some of its predecessors, but it was more broadly representative and the international feature was more prominent, the delegates coming from thirty-four societies, eleven of them outside of Great Britain.

These four conferences did not attract much notice beyond missionary circles, and their proceedings did not cover a very extensive range as compared with some of their successors; but they brought together men of faith and vision to plan for the more adequate occupation and the more effective working of the world field.

The need of wider views and more thorough preparation now became clearer, and in June, 1888, a conference was held in London to mark the centenary of modern Protestant missions, which challenged the attention of the Christian world. This conference was interdenominational and international on a large scale, the one thousand four hundred and ninety-four

delegates including one hundred and thirty-two from America, eighteen from the Continent and three from the Colonies. But while the large preponderance of membership was British, one thousand three hundred and forty-one of the one thousand four hundred and ninety-four, a majority of the missionary societies represented were in other countries, the roll showing sixty-seven American societies, fifty-three British, eighteen Continental and two Colonial—one hundred and forty in all.

The idea of united planning for the evangelization of the world was now fairly launched, and in April, 1900, the memorable Ecumenical Missionary Conference convened, in New York, the sixth in number. Forty-eight countries and one hundred and fifteen societies were represented, fifteen hundred delegates coming from North America, two hundred from Europe, and six hundred from the foreign mission fields, twenty-three hundred in all. The sessions were attended by multitudes of interested people. A former President of the United States, the Hon. Benjamin Harrison, was honourary chairman. The President of the United States at the time, the Hon. William McKinley, made a special trip from Washington to speak at the opening meeting. The Governor of New York, the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, personally welcomed the Conference and made one of the principal addresses. The newspapers of the entire country gave large attention to the proceedings and President Harrison declared that in all his public life he had never known a political convention which could have maintained intense interest in undiminished strength for so long a period as the ten days of that Conference.

The demand for unity and coöperation in foreign missionary work now grew more rapidly, and in June, 1910, the seventh conference, The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, reached high water mark. Unlike its predecessors, its membership was strictly limited, each society sending out foreign missionaries and having an annual income of not less than ten thousand dollars being allowed one delegate and additional delegates in proportion to additional expenditures on a fixed schedule. This limited the membership to twelve hundred. The societies sent their full quotas and most of them wanted to exceed their authorized allowance. This careful basis of representation made the Conference far more widely representative than its predecessors, and about twenty-five hundred visitors, including hundreds of eminent Christian workers, added to its distinction. Members of communions that had hitherto held aloof from other conferences were prominent at Edinburgh because, as one of them rather naïvely remarked: "We couldn't afford to stay away."

And so it was a unique gathering. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Moderators of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, the Lord Bishops of Durham and Birmingham and the pastors of dissenting Wesleyan and Baptist chapels, members of the British House of Lords, an ex-Governor of Pennsylvania, William Jennings Bryan, Danish nobles, Swedish bishops, German professors, French and Swiss ministers, the Bishop of Gippsland, diplomats, army and navy officers, university presidents and business men, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, and Americans, missionaries from every non-Christian land under the

sun, and not least, Christian leaders of the growing churches of Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands—was there ever before such a broadly representative assemblage? Speakers from different lands followed one another in kaleidoscopic variety. Canadians, Scotchmen, Irishmen, East Indians, Japanese, Continentals, Englishmen, Chinese, negroes and Americans passed in quick procession under the inexorable seven-minute rule, and then the whole assemblage bowed in prayer under the leadership of an Anglican Lord Bishop or a Presbyterian pastor from Baltimore.

All this meant cosmopolitan discussions. The eight Commissions, which had been at work for two years, presented an immense range and variety of information, and subjects received consideration from all points of view. Horizon limits expanded as when one ascends a lofty mountain, until the whole wide world seemed to be spread out before the vision.

Recognition of the importance of this Conference grows as the date recedes. All others drew their membership from comparatively small areas, or from single communions, like the Pan-Anglican and Pan-Presbyterian Councils. But The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh drew its membership from widely separated parts of the earth and from every Christian communion except the Roman and Greek Churches. It has been well said that the first assemblage of Christian leaders in Jerusalem consisted of a handful of Jews who considered whether the Gospel should be given to the Gentiles, while the last at Edinburgh consisted of more than a thousand Gentiles who considered how the Gospel might be more effectively given to the whole non-Christian world of which the

Jews form but a very small part. "Since the Gospel has been preached in every land," ran the quaint action of a meeting of Chinese Christians at Yun-cheng, Shan-si, "conferences are of course ordinary occurrences in the Church; but this gathering in Scotland is such that it cannot but be thought of with longing. Alas, that we are born and bred in China and have never seen such an extraordinary sight!"

The Edinburgh Conference was unique in another important particular. Other conferences ended with their adjournment, but the Edinburgh Conference goes on through its Continuation Committee. It is this fact which gives significance to that Committee. The Conference set in motion powerful forces and accelerated others which were already in operation. It felt that it should not dissolve without creating some body which could deal more deliberately and systematically with those forces. Antecedent fears that the Conference might go too far vanished as sessions progressed, until amid scenes of profound solemnity and emotion the delegates by unanimous vote constituted the Continuation Committee. The Committee represents interests which have never before been united. Its thirty-nine members come from fourteen different countries—England, Scotland, France, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, Africa and Australasia, and from no less than thirty communions, including Anglicans, several types of Non-Conformists of England, the Established and Free Churches of Scotland, the State and Independent Churches of the Continent, and half a dozen communions in the United States.

The Committee is prosecuting its work through

twelve special committees along many lines which illustrate the need of coöperative study. Not least among these is the promotion of coöperation and unity in mission work. The Committee cannot, of course, deal with the ecclesiastical phases of this problem. It is not an ecclesiastical body and it has no jurisdiction over churches. But it is in a position to observe and report upon union and coöperative movements that are already taking place. It can show what a degree of unity already exists, how rapidly it is increasing and how practicable it is for men of different communions to associate in Christian work without discussing their differences of faith and order. It can impress the churches with the world's tremendous need, the imperative necessity of combining to meet it, and the sin and folly of internecine strife in the presence of a formidable and united foe. The Committee has no intention whatever of tampering with ecclesiastical theological differences; it would break up at once if it made any attempt of that kind. It is concerned with what the Spirit of God is doing in the non-Christian world and with what the home societies can and should do to advance the divine plan. It is showing the broad aspects of that majestic unity which is slowly being shaped before our eyes and whose full outlines we do not yet see. The Committee therefore faces a great opportunity as well as a great privilege, and it should receive the sympathetic attention of thoughtful people in all communions.

It would be interesting to collate the policies of the leading missionary boards as they have been enunciated from time to time. Space limits permit only a few

citations. The American Presbyterian Board, May 15, 1900, adopted a report which included the following:

"Believing that the time has come for a yet larger measure of union and coöperation in missionary work, the Board would ask the General Assembly to approve its course in recommending to its missions in various lands that they encourage as far as practicable the formation of union churches, in which the results of the mission work of all allied evangelical churches should be gathered, and that they observe everywhere the most generous principles of missionary comity. In the view of the Board, the object of the Foreign Missionary enterprise is not to perpetuate on the mission field the denominational distinctions of Christendom, but to build upon Scriptural lines, and according to Scriptural methods, the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fellowship and union among native Christians of whatever name should be encouraged in every possible way, with a view to that unity of all disciples for which our Lord prayed and to which all mission effort should contribute."

When this action was reported to the General Assembly of that year with a view to ascertaining whether such a deliverance would have the approval of the Church, the Assembly's Standing Committee hailed it "with sincere gratitude and satisfaction," declaring that "no more important administrative problem than that of interdenominational comity on the foreign field is at present before the mind of the entire Church," and that, if approved by the Assembly, it would "place our beloved Church in the very forefront of that irenic movement which has as its chief aims the promotion of a spirit of brotherhood among missionaries of the several denominations working side by side in non-

Christian lands and the furtherance of a native Church rooting itself deeply in the soil of the lands evangelized." The Assembly thereupon unanimously approved the Board's action. Indeed the official minutes of General Assemblies contain no less than twenty-two reports and deliverances in the last twenty-seven years on various phases of this general subject of coöperation and unity. In 1913, the Joint Executive Committee, consisting of representatives of the General Assembly's Executive Commission and of all the Boards of the Church, reprinted and widely distributed an article by Dr. Robert E. Speer on "The World Task of the Presbyterian Church" which, before setting forth details of the work, declared: "Our Church has been and is of John the Baptist's mind. It holds its mission to be not world extension, not the absorption of other bodies, not a permanent partial testimony to the truth of God which is greater than any single statement of it, but disappearance in the larger unity of the Body of Christ. At home and abroad, the Church conceives its task to be to prepare for and to welcome not only the largest possible measure of coöperation and friendship but also the organic union of the bodies of which Jesus Christ is the head." The Presbyterian Church, therefore, like the Protestant Episcopal, is definitely and authoritatively committed to the movement for organic union.

The American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, in September, 1912, included the following in a statement of "general policy": "That to the utmost practical extent there should be coöperation with other Christian bodies working in the same fields. Such coöperation is of special importance in the department of higher education, where students are relatively few and

education expensive." This declaration was approved by the Baptist Convention of May, 1913, which put forth a memorable statement in which it professed "both willingness and humility to learn from others any aspects of the way of life which we may not have held in due proportion." Secretaries of the missionary boards of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, Southern Presbyterian, Congregational, Disciples, and several other churches, write to the common effect that, while their respective boards have not formulated their policy in general statements, they are "heartily in favour of union and coöperation" and "have repeatedly expressed it in concrete cases" which are "always considered from the view-point of sympathy for the principle." The Foreign Secretary of the American Board, the Rev. James L. Barton, D. D., has publicly stated that "the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has repeatedly committed itself to any and every practical plan of coöperation which was within the limits of its financial resources, believing that its work in Asia and Africa is not to build up a church according to any set model, but that it is to coöperate with other Christian workers in the establishment of the living Church of Jesus Christ as the centre of power and life and redemption for all men."

The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention does not deem itself free under present conditions to go quite so far as some of the other boards. With the exception of furnishing a physician for the Medical Department of the Nanking Christian University and uniting with the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards in issuing a Portuguese edition of a volume on

"Homiletics," the coöperative work of this Board thus far is limited to a few joint enterprises with its sister Board of the same denominational family, the Northern Baptist. In 1914 the Board stated in its report: "It is hardly necessary to say that the Foreign Mission Board will not enter upon any scheme, coöperative or otherwise, which in any way will compromise the principles of our denomination or will tend to impair its denominational integrity." Unwillingness to "compromise principles" commands our full sympathy. The assumption that denominational principles forbid the impairment of denominational "integrity" has been discussed elsewhere. The position of the denomination as a whole is stated in a strong and dignified "Pronouncement on Christian Union and Denominational Efficiency" which was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention of 1914.[1] After "rejoicing in the many evidences of increasing interest in the subject of Christian Union," deploring that "many evils arise from the divided state of modern Christendom" and stating "four things which we take for granted," it adds:

"In order to define our attitude to the question of Christian Union, we deem it necessary to state our understanding of the Gospel on the following points: (1) The relation of the individual to God; (2) The nature of the change which takes place in the individual when right relations are established with God; (3) The initial ordinance whose observance is enjoined by Christ at the outset of the renewed life; (4) The nature of the spiritual fellowship and life of the church into which the renewed man enters; (5) The relation of the Church to the State and to the world at large. It will be found

[1] Cf. Annual of The Southern Baptist Convention, 1914, pp. 73–78.

that all these are vitally related to each other, and that if clearly understood they convey the message which Baptists believe to be intrusted to them for the blessing of the world."

These subjects do not suggest anything distinctive. The crux of the belief that they "convey the message which Baptists believe to be intrusted to them" lies in the words: "if clearly understood," for the pronouncement proceeds to discuss each one in order to show how Southern Baptists interpret them. But the interpretation, although filling three closely printed pages, indicates nothing necessarily divisive except on baptism.

The position of the Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church is indicated in the following letter in reply to the communication from The Home Missions Council referred to on pages 257–258.

"Our Executive Committee, at its meeting on March 11th, adopted the following resolution:

"'Resolved, That the Executive Committee of The Home Missions Council be informed that while the Board of Missions desires to do everything in its power to further the practice of comity, it is unable, in view of the methods by which the missionary work of this Church is at present administered, and which the Board of Missions does not control, to accept for itself or to recommend to the Bishops of the Church the acceptance of the definite plan proposed in the circular letter of February 14, 1913. The Board has pleasure, however, in expressing its belief that the several Bishops will desire to observe the spirit of this report, so far as it is practicable to do so.'

"In explanation, let me say that the Board of Missions is not authorized to determine the policy to be followed in such matters in the several dioceses and mis-

sionary districts, to which it makes appropriations. That is a matter for each Bishop to decide for himself." [1]

European missionary societies are, as a rule, less free than American societies to adopt a union policy. Some of them strongly sympathize with it. The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference showed that the British and Continental delegates were no whit behind their brethren from across the sea in advocating coöperation and unity. But religious distinctions, like social and political ones, are not so easily disregarded in the older and more settled communities of Europe as in the newer and more plastic communities of North America, while established and non-established churches are separated by abysses so wide that they are not readily bridged. And yet any American missionary worker who approaches a European society on a question of comity can testify to the heartiness of the welcome that is accorded him. As far back as 1886, The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England issued a statement: "That this Society deprecates any measure of church organization which may tend to permanently subject the native church units in India to the formation and arrangements of the National and Established Church of a far distant and very different country, and therefore desires that all present arrangements for church organization should remain as elastic as possi-

[1] Letter of Mr. John W. Wood, Secretary, March 17, 1913. Cf. also statement by Mr. Wood of "the reason why the Episcopal Church could not officially coöperate in Mexico, though deeply concerned in the vital work of the Missions," in Report of Conference of Missionaries and Missionary Boards Working in Mexico, Cincinnati, June 30, 1914.

ble, until the native Christians themselves shall be numerous and powerful enough to have a dominant voice in the formation of an ecclesiastical constitution on lines suitable to the Indian people."

Many interdenominational conferences of missionary workers have eloquently voiced their longing for unity and their conviction that the conditions of the modern world urgently require it. Whole chapters might be filled with citations from such deliverances. Memorable among them is that of Commission VIII of The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910:

"We are beginning to see that the Church is again facing a mighty conflict, like that which arose when the living forces of the Gospel contended with the forces of the pagan world in the early centuries. While we recognize the incidental advantages which may result from separate administrations, and rejoice in the testimony to any successful efforts which have been made to improve organization and promote coöperation, yet the fact remains that the Christian forces are confronting their gigantic task without adequate combination and without sufficient generalship. The work is a campaign of allies; and yet many of the allies are ignorant of what the others are doing.

"The Commission gladly recognizes that in the presentation of the Christian message in non-Christian countries there is underneath the outward differences and separation a deep and real unity of aim and purpose. None the less do the divisions within the Christian Church weaken its testimony and confuse the total impression made by Christianity on the minds of the non-Christian peoples.

"The question necessarily forces itself on those immediately engaged in the work of Christianizing the great nations of the East, whether they are content to plant in these countries a multitude of Christian sects,

or whether the real purpose of missionary effort is not rather to plant in each land one united Church of Christ, penetrating and strongly influencing the national life of the people and at the same time bound in the unity of the spirit to the Church throughout the world."

A conference of seventy-five representatives of twenty-eight North American Boards having work in China, held in New York, February 29, 1912, adopted the following resolutions as an expression of its opinion:

"1. This Conference desires to assure the Missions in the strongest possible manner of its unreserved approval of the effort to accomplish the union of the Christian Church in China and promises the Missions that they will have in such efforts the hearty support of the members of this Conference.

"2. The Conference approves of the fullest possible measure not only of coöperation but of union in all forms of mission work, such as education, preparation and publication of literature, hospitals and philanthropic work.

"3. With deep satisfaction at the establishment and development of the Church of Christ in China, and recognizing the supreme place which the Chinese Church must occupy in the evangelization of the nation, this Conference expresses its sympathy with every purpose of the Church itself to unite in the interests of increased strength and economy and of the effective propagation of the Gospel of Christ."

The list of coöperative foreign missionary organizations and efforts at the home base is a long one, including the great conferences already noted, such geographical groupings of societies as the Foreign Missions Conference of North America founded in 1893; the Conference of Societies in Great Britain and Ireland,

formed in 1912 by officers and members of thirty-seven societies; and the Continental Auschuss originally organized by the German societies and later enlarged to represent the societies of all Protestant churches of the Continent. Each of these three great organizations has annual meetings which exert great influence in the promotion of fellowship and the development of mission policy. Committees on various subjects carry on active work during the year, and their reports, together with the proceedings and discussions of the annual meetings of the conferences, constitute a rich mine of missionary information. Boards of Missionary Preparation, one for Great Britain and one for North America and organized respectively in 1911 and 1912, are handling the common problem of the special preparation required for modern missionary service, and more and more the societies are studying together and grappling in a coöperative way the large problems and undertakings of world evangelization.

We may fairly conclude therefore that coöperation and unity may now be characterized as the established policy of the foreign missionary societies of the world. Some societies do not feel prepared to commit themselves as fully as others, but only a very few deem it their duty to hold back. Even these societies are glad to have their officers and members actively participate in interdenominational conferences and committees, in all matters which do not appear to involve questions that lie beyond the scope of the powers that the ecclesiastical bodies concerned have entrusted to their missionary agencies.

While the conditions that were described in the first part of this chapter made it easier for foreign mission-

ary workers to move first in the direction of unity and coöperation, the boards of home missions in America have recently begun to take up their vast problems in joint effort. The Home Missions Council of North America, organized in 1908, now represents thirty societies in twenty-one communions, and has become an exceedingly useful and effective agency. It is applying itself with special energy to lessening the evils of denominational over-churching in small communities, and its bulletins and annual reports form a thesaurus of suggestive facts. In 1912, "The Neglected Fields Survey Committee" of the Council travelled together through fifteen western states and thoroughly studied the local situations. A conference of the Committee with representative men from each state was marked by a fine spirit of earnestness and comity and "a slogan of the gathering was: No two boards spending missionary money in the same community." In 1914, the Council adopted a "Proposed Plan for Comity and Coöperation" from which we quote the following extracts:

"Persuaded of the urgent need of some comprehensive and united plan for the evangelization of our country and for closer coöperation to make such plan effective, The Home Missions Council proposes for the consideration of its constituent societies the following principles of Comity. . . .

"First. As to the occupancy of new fields. . . . In districts or in places already occupied by any denomination, new work should be undertaken by any other body only after fraternal conference between the official representatives of the missionary organizations embracing those localities.

"Second. In communities already occupied by two or

more denominations, . . . there shall be friendly conference in the spirit of the Great Head of the Church and recourse be had, when necessary, to the local or national missionary authorities, whose findings properly communicated shall have behind them the moral force of this Council.

"Third. Over-churched communities. This condition presents the most difficult comity problem. But by every consideration of efficiency and fraternity it should be faced. It is evident that no fast and hard program can be given. This Home Missions Council, however, suggests that fraternal conferences should be held between the field workers of the denominations concerned to see if in a spirit of supreme devotion to the Kingdom such consensus might not be made as would promote efficiency and coöperation. Nothing would more commend and illustrate the real union of God's people than such surrenders of denominational prestige and rights to the larger claims of God's Kingdom."

The replies of the societies were unanimously favourable to the general purpose of the Council, although a few raised questions regarding details and one or two reported that under their forms of church government they had no jurisdiction in such matters.[1]

Serious obstacles must be encountered, for the Council is not dealing with a comparatively small number of churches scattered among vast and distant foreign populations but with a large number of churches which constitute integral parts of powerful historic communions, so that the question to be dealt with goes straight to the heart of the whole denominational propaganda. An ecclesiastical body in the United States may be quite willing to have its Tamil churches in India unite with the churches of another communion, but hesitate

[1] Cf. page 252.

considerably about relinquishing some of its American constituency in Texas, upon whose growth it depends as one of the factors in its own future development and status. This seems more like giving away children and breaking up families.

The home missionary statesmen, however, are not shrinking from their task, for they, too, have caught the splendid vision of the united Church of the future and they are in a position to feel keenly the grievous waste and injury of the present multiplication and duplication of religious effort.

XV

PRACTICAL METHODS OF PROMOTING UNITY

A PLAN of organic union that is acceptable to any considerable number of communions has not yet been devised; but it may be well to mention some practical methods of promoting a spirit of unity which will dissolve certain present objections and facilitate the adoption of the right plan when it is discovered. Union must grow; it cannot be manufactured. This does not relieve man of responsibility, for growth can be accelerated or retarded by human means. Corn must grow, but the farmer who expects it to do so without diligent effort on his part will have no crop. The following helpful methods may be mentioned. Most of them are now commonplace, and they are all the more useful on that account.

Mutual acquaintance is one which often proves efficacious. A distinguished member of the Church of England once lamented to me that Christians in Great Britain live in water-tight compartments with virtually no opportunity to know those who are in other communions. Ignorance begets distrust; for there still survives, even among the most civilized people, the suspicion which characterizes primitive man's attitude towards a stranger. The word rival originally meant the tribe on the other side of a boundary river. To be across the line was to be an enemy. Social amenities usually soften distrust. Napoleon Bonaparte found

that one of the best ways to harmonize jealous generals was to invite them to a dinner where nothing was said about mooted questions and where genial intercourse created an atmosphere which made those questions look trivial. The fellowships of the many interdenominational conferences and committees are worth all they cost from this view-point alone. The atmosphere of such meetings is one in which it would be difficult for a sectarian spirit to survive. A High Church Anglican Bishop in China told me that during the preceding year circumstances had brought him into personal relations with a number of Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries, and that he had been agreeably surprised to find "what decent chaps they were."

Study of the work of other churches is another helpful method. A knowledge of their good points will prove exceedingly interesting and give one new respect for them. When a Christian finds out, as he is certain to do sooner or later, that another denomination is preaching the same doctrines as his own, he is very likely to wonder why the two churches should stand apart. The fact that there now is such a concensus of belief is a powerful influence for union.

Avoidance of the assumption that God has made one's own church a specially favoured one is a negative method which yields positive results. There are Christians old enough to know better that are like the little girl, who, after hearing some one say that the prayer of a Baptist had been answered, exclaimed: "Why, Mamma, I thought God was a Presbyterian!" Every communion contains men and women who walk with God and joyfully seek to do His will. One communion may manifest more spiritual power than another in

a given period ; but a comparison through a long reach of historical perspective will show that the different denominational groups balance fairly well and that no one of them can validly claim to be the main channel of divine grace, much less the exclusive one.

Where conviction of duty compels one to promulgate denominationally distinctive views, Christian candour requires an explanation of the fact that other devout followers of Christ entertain a different view. It is unfair to convey the impression that Christianity is indissolubly identified with an interpretation of the Bible which is rejected by large bodies of believers. Partisan teaching of this kind is suicidal, especially on the mission field, for sooner or later the native finds out that some missionaries and many Christians in western lands hold a different opinion, and then there is danger either that his faith will be weakened or that his confidence in the missionary will be impaired. We must, indeed, frankly admit that there are questions on which we differ. We may even tell the native what those things are and why we believe that we are right. But when we present such questions, let us be manly enough to tell him at the same time that equally intelligent and devoted Christians think differently, so that when he learns those differences for himself, his faith will not be disturbed.

Informal meetings for friendly discussion will often clear away misunderstandings and bring the reasons for union into clearer relief. Care should be exercised in selecting topics and speakers lest such meetings degenerate into mere debates. It is hazardous to ask some men to present the reasons for their own denominational position, as such a request is apt to set them

to hunting up half-forgotten arguments of a former century which have little or no relevancy to the problems of the present day. Pride of position, too, may be developed in one who advocates one side of a question in the presence of others. The average minister knows enough of his own communion but not enough of others. Better request him to prepare a paper on the teachings of some other church than his own. He will probably be surprised to find how close the accord really is. In proposing a "Truce of God among the churches throughout Christendom," the Advisory Committee of the Commissions on the World Conference on Faith and Order wisely observes: "It is of essential importance for us to seek to understand what in the religious experience of others are the things of real value which they would not lose, and which should be conserved in the one household of faith. We pray also that each Christian communion may avoid, so far as possible, any controversial declaration of its own position in relation to others, but rather that all things be said and done as if in preparation of the coming together of faithful disciples from every nation and tongue to implore a fresh outpouring of God's Holy Spirit."[1]

An indispensable method of promoting the spirit of unity, or at least of preventing its destruction, is thoughtful observance of those rules of comity which, whether written out and formally adopted or not, are involved in the Christian attitude towards fellow workers of other bodies. Among these rules are the following:[2]

[1] Letter To Our Christian Brethren in Every Land, March 21, 1914.

[2] "The Foreign Missionary," pp. 255 sq.

First: Ministers of one communion should not enter the field of another communion without a frank and mutually satisfactory understanding.

Second: Ministers should not baptize or receive into church membership persons who were led to Christ by a minister of another communion, or who are members of families belonging to another communion, without the knowledge of the minister concerned. There are reasonable limits to this. Of course, we should not deny to a convert the right which we claim for ourselves to choose his own church relationship or to change an ecclesiastical connection which no longer represents his convictions. But we are discussing the course of a church officer not the voluntary act of an individual applicant for membership.

Third: The discipline of another communion should be carefully respected. It is a grievous violation of comity for a church to receive a suspended or excommunicated communicant without consultation with the church which disciplined him.

Fourth: A missionary should never employ a native worker from another mission without due inquiry of the mission that formerly employed him.

Fifth: Each foreign mission should give due regard to the general scale of pay of native workers of other missions in the same general region. If possible, this scale should be fixed in conference and be approximately uniform. It is a serious breach of comity for a member of one mission to offer a worker of another mission a higher wage than he is receiving. One thoughtless missionary in this way may demoralize a whole native force and cause justifiable irritation. A belief that the scale of pay is too low, or that a par-

ticular native evangelist or teacher deserves a larger salary, is not an adequate excuse. The proper place for consideration of such matters is in a conference with the missionaries concerned.

Sixth: A minister should not take up the work of another church on the ground that it is not being properly done. I found an American missionary in India preaching statedly to British soldiers, in spite of the fact that the regiment had a Protestant chaplain who held regular services. The missionary urged in extenuation that the chaplain's services were perfunctory and without spiritual influence. But who made that missionary a judge over his brother clergyman, and why should he neglect the natives to whom he had been sent and who had never heard the Gospel at all, because he felt that he could preach to British soldiers better than the chaplain who was maintained for that express purpose? What would he have thought if the chaplain had begun services for the Indian Christians under the missionary's care on the ground that they were not being adequately ministered to?

Seventh: A Christian worker should not enter the field of another communion because he feels that his teaching represents a more perfect type of obedience to Christ and that he has no right to withhold it from any people even though they may have already accepted another evangelical type. The most "perfect type of obedience to Christ" includes not only the teachings of Jesus but the spirit of Jesus, and His spirit was at a far remove from all assumption of superior orthodoxy. In His time, the intolerant, holier-than-thou men, who imagined that they alone had the truth, were called Pharisees, and the Master

handled them more severely than He did publicans and sinners. We do not say that all creeds are equally sound or that it is a Christian's duty to regard every other man's interpretation of the Bible as beyond criticism. There are times and places for the proper discussion of such matters. We are simply considering here the relations of evangelical workers to one another and the unwisdom and unfairness of proselyting in the fields of Christian brethren of other churches.

Eighth: When a new church is to be organized or a new field entered, due consideration should be given to the preferences of any Christians already on the ground or to prior rights acquired by any neighbouring communion.

An advanced position on comity occasionally operates to the apparent disadvantage of the communion that espouses it. But let us be true to our ideals even if some whom we might have reached do go to heaven by a different route. Other churches are preaching the Gospel, and those who accept it at their hands will be saved. Isolated cases of embarrassment will doubtless occur, but they will be insignificant in comparison with the embarrassments inherent in sectarian divisions. We are here to preach Christ, to preach Him as we understand Him; but if any one else insists on preaching Him in a given place and will do so with equal fidelity to His divinity and atonement, let us coöperate with them, or federate with them, or combine with them, or give up the field to them, as the circumstances may require. The problem before us is not simply where we can do good, but where we can do the most good, how to use to the best advantage the limited resources at our command. Givers to mission work have a right to

demand this. Many of their gifts involve self-sacrifice, and they should be used where real need exists. "There remains yet very much land to be possessed." I have seen enough of it to burden my heart as long as I live —toiling, sorrowing, sin-laden multitudes, who might be better Christians than we are if they had our chance, but who are scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. And shall we multiply missionaries in places already occupied and dispute as to who shall preach in a given field, when these millions are dying without the Gospel? In the presence of so vast a need, let Christians remember that their points of disagreement are less vital than their points of agreement, and that they should deem themselves under solemn constraint to proclaim a common Gospel to a lost world.

The dictionary definition of comity is suggestive: "kindly consideration for others, friendliness in regard to rights." It is not, therefore, an armed truce or a mere mechanical adjustment. It simply calls for that mutual consideration which is the normal impulse of those whom Whittier has happily called:

> " . . . the saints elect
> Who twain in faith, in love agree,
> And melt not in an acid sect
> The Christian pearl of charity."

Utilization of every opportunity to advocate union is a method which should be more generally adopted. A large and increasing number of clergymen and laymen are already doing this, and the literature of the subject is rapidly growing. But many who believe in union are silent when proposals come up for discussion.

Those who oppose union are active, as they have a right to be; but friends often leave a few men to bear the brunt of the opposition, so that the public gets a wrong idea of the real sentiment for union. In one ecclesiastical body, I saw the defeat of a proposal to unite with another communion when I knew that a majority favoured it. Most of them took no part in the discussion and some did not vote. Why? I do not presume to attempt to state the reasons in every case, and I am aware that failure to vote may be construed as a lack of interest, to say nothing of the fact that parliamentary law counts silence as acquiescence with the majority. Some, however, privately said that they took no part because they knew that, if they did, they would be pilloried as heterodox and disloyal, and they hesitated to expose themselves and their work to such attacks. I personally know several eminent men, including some secretaries of mission boards, who take this position. They freely admit that they are prepared to go far towards union; but that they are reluctant to draw the fire of the element in their respective churches which is not ready for it, lest injury befall the cause which they represent. One who, like the writer, belongs to a body which has repeatedly declared its desire for union, may not be in a position to give due weight to this consideration. We may only suggest:

First: There never would have been any reforms, nor would much progress have been made either in religion, politics or society, if those who saw necessity for change had held their peace. A pastor or an officer of a denominational agency must indeed be mindful of his representative position and, in his official capacity, not run too far ahead of the constituency whose legiti-

mate interests may be affected by his acts. But neither should lag behind it, nor feel that his liberty of personal utterance is circumscribed. Clergymen are supposed to be leaders of religious opinion, not followers.

Second: It is becoming increasingly difficult to avoid an expression of opinion on union. It is not now a question of going out of one's way to take up an outside matter. The question in some form is coming up so often in ecclesiastical bodies that members cannot easily evade it without abdicating their duty. The missionary secretary, in particular, frequently finds it confronting him in his routine work, and he must be for or against it.

Third: To be silent in order to avoid an attack upon one's motives or loyalty to the truth is to do injustice to the Christian men who sincerely doubt the desirability or practicability of union under present conditions. It is true that a few of them regard the union movement as latitudinarian or frankly heretical and that they distrust its advocates accordingly. The man who counts all who differ with him as traitors is always with us. But such men are exceptions and are offset by a few champions of union who are equally intolerant. Neither party to this issue has a monopoly of orthodoxy or moderation. We are persuaded that the typical clergymen and laymen on both sides recognize that the question is one for fair and candid argument, that all alike desire the union for which our Lord prayed, and that they look upon the discussion as an honest difference of judgment between equally devoted followers of Christ who are not yet agreed as to the time for union or the method by which it should be attained. Surely the more discussion there is of this

kind, the better for all concerned and for the cause of truth.

Supreme among all methods of promoting unity is prayer—daily, intercessory, importunate prayer; prayer that our own hearts may be cleansed from all feelings of the kind that "can come out by nothing save by prayer"; that we may have the charity towards our brethren which finds expression in perfect love; that we may enter more deeply into the will of our Lord regarding His Church; that whether or not the time has yet come for organic union, the God of all grace and power may lead us into the "fellowship of the Spirit"; that "having the same love" we may be "of one accord," "doing nothing through faction or through vainglory but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each to his own things, but each also to the things of others"; and that we may "have this mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus."[1]

[1] Phil. ii. 1-5.

XVI

CAN ORGANIC UNION BE LONG DELAYED?

WE might as well face the fact that the Christians of Asia will probably unite whether we want them to or not. They may divide later; they probably will, for the clan spirit is strong in many Asiatic nations, notably in Japan and India. But if Asiatic Christians do divide, they should do so on their own issues and not on alien ones imposed from the West. They are already manifesting an inquisitively independent spirit regarding foreign sectarian divisions. The communication from the Marathi Mission of the American Board to the Western India Mission of the Presbyterian Board, referred to on a preceding page, adduced as an additional reason for union that "many of the members of the various Indian Churches most earnestly desire to lessen their ecclesiastical divisions in a movement towards one Indian National Church. So it is absolutely certain that the difference between the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches cannot hold Indian Christians apart, unless foreign missionaries continue to perpetuate such divisions. Also large numbers of Indian Christians frankly say that, so long as the fundamentals of the Christian faith are accepted by themselves, they are distinctly averse to many of the metaphysical or other theological distinctions on which many western Christians place importance, and which in the West create divisions and alienations."

When several communions united in a certain theological college in China, the missionaries adopted the plan of teaching to the full classes subjects on which the coöperating churches were agreed and of giving separate private instruction by denominational professors to their own students. When this arrangement was announced, the Chinese students objected, stating that they wanted to know about all the denominations and that they preferred to have each professor explain his position before the whole body of students. The professors could not refuse such a request; but they found that it was not easy to be aggressively sectarian when they were addressing students and colleagues of other communions. The importance of some denominational tenets began to shrink before such an audience, and others did not appear to be quite so vital as they appeared in a denominational class room.

A professor in another theological seminary was endeavouring to explain to his Chinese class the difference between Arminianism and Calvinism. After a laborious effort, he said to them: "Young gentlemen, do you clearly get the fundamental difference between these two great systems of theology?" "Yes, Professor," replied one of the Chinese, "we do get it, and we don't think there is much in it. The Arminian is sure that he has salvation, but he is afraid he is going to lose it; while the Calvinist is sure that he won't lose it, but is afraid he hasn't got it."

It gives one an uncomfortable feeling to read such an opinion as the following in an article in *The Chinese Recorder of Shanghai:* "So long as they (the Chinese) are under the hand of a strong leader—a missionary who by force of character or by virtue of his official

position in the church can and does serve as a final court of appeal and is able to carry his point almost as a dictator—the preachers and teachers, together with the rank and file of the church membership, fall in line and may be welded together as a harmonious working force."[1] "So long as they are under the hand of a strong leader!" Aye, and so long only. One is reminded of the grim remark of an East Indian pastor that "were it not for the vigilance of the western shepherds, the Indian sheep would some fine morning be all found in one fold."

The Rev. J. C. Garritt, D. D., of Nanking, says that at a union meeting of the churches in that region a Chinese clergyman arose and said, as he pointed in turn to several missionaries: "You are an American Presbyterian; and you can't help it, for you were brought up that way. You are a Canadian Methodist; and you can't help it, for you were brought up that way. You are an English Churchman; and you can't help it either, for you were brought up that way. But we are Chinese Christians, and we do not propose to permit you men from abroad to keep us apart."

This is the spirit that is more and more characterizing the Christians of Asia, and we may well rejoice in it.

Some thoughtful men have expressed grave doubt whether we can wisely entrust the question of organic union to the native Christians. We cannot help ourselves, for Asiatic Christians are following the example of the Japanese in forming their own churches outside of the missions. Even if we could prevent them, are we popes that we should decide how the rising churches

[1] January, 1913, p. 9.

of Asia should organize? When our Lord promised to be with His disciples alway, did He mean only those of a later day in Europe and America? Are the leadings of the Holy Spirit confined to white men? Let us have faith in God and faith in our brethren in every land where God has made Himself known.

We confront a like determination of independence in many Christian workers at home. They see that the immensity of the task before the Church requires union. Organizations for this purpose have become numerous. The Christian Unity Association of Scotland, which has passed its tenth anniversary, avows that its aim is "to maintain, foster, and as far as possible express the consciousness of underlying unity that is shared by many members of the different churches in Scotland; to promote understanding and coöperation in Christian work generally, and particularly in dealing with those special practical problems which from time to time face the churches; and to remove or abate doctrinal and ecclesiastical divergences by frank and confidential discussion of historical and theological topics."

The High Church Party in the Church of England has had ever since 1857 The Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom whose object is "to unite in a bond of intercessory prayer members both of clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic, Greek and Anglican Communions, for their healing, mainly to a corporate reunion of those three great bodies which claim for themselves the inheritance of the priesthood and the name of Catholic."

The Churchmen's Union, composed of members of the Broad Church Party in the Church of England,

was formed in 1896 "to encourage friendly relations between the Church of England and all other Christian bodies."

The Swanwick Free Church Fellowship is a body of over three hundred of the younger ministers of the non-Anglican Churches of Great Britain whose effort is, "in the light of all new knowledge and scientific method, to reëxamine and, if need be, reëxpress for our own time the fundamental affirmations of the faith," and "to cultivate a new spiritual fellowship and communion with all branches of the Christian Church."

Meantime, laymen are taking the matter into their own hands in some significant ways. Organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association, the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Men and Religion Movement, the Federation of Churches, and a variety of other associations mean, among other things, that increasing numbers of Christians are resolved to get together in Christian work, and as they cannot do so through their churches, they do so outside of them. The success of these undenominational movements may well cause mingled rejoicing and anxiety—rejoicing because necessary work is so effectively done; anxiety because it is not done by the churches and could not be done by them as they are now divided. What should be done by the churches themselves must therefore be done by voluntary combinations of lay members outside of them.

Ministers often claim for the churches a credit for these movements that is only partially deserved. It is indeed to the praise of the churches that they have inculcated a spirit of service which surmounts denominational barriers. But it is not to their credit that when

their communicants were moved to exemplify that spirit, they had to climb over the fences that the denominational leaders had so laboriously built.

This is not a criticism of the undenominational organizations referred to. It is a criticism of ecclesiastics who compel that method of attaining a commendable object. This tendency to outside Christian effort is growing so rapidly that if clergymen do not soon devise some practical way of working together as churches, a large part of the vital force of Christian activity will expend itself through undenominational agencies without the sacraments, and we shall have a union which will leave the churches hollow shells because their vital principle has been transferred to voluntary and independent lay societies. It is well known that there is even now a large element in one of the strongest of these organizations of laymen which is demanding a change in the rule that active membership shall be limited to members of evangelical churches, and that the leaders have had to exert all their influence to prevent a trend that would be centrifugal to the churches. The time is swiftly passing, if indeed it has not already passed, when ecclesiastical bodies can prudently assume an attitude of indifference or obstruction towards the movement for organic union. While attempting to avoid what they believe to be a danger in union, a worse thing may befall them and the cause of Christ—a churchless union of laymen who will simply ignore their ecclesiastical guides.

Matters have already come to such a pass that the churches are being seriously discredited and some vital causes are being gravely jeopardized. "Let us sup-

pose," says Bishop Charles P. Anderson, "that it is determined to organize some public charity or to inaugurate some uplift movement. You are sure that it has the sanction of Christ and of all good men. What happens? The first move is to proclaim from the housetops that it is undenominational and non-sectarian. It is Christian clearly enough, but nevertheless it has to be dissociated from churches in order to express the consciousness of the Church. In one way this is travesty on churches. In another way it is eloquent for good. It means that Christ's work refuses to come under sectarian lines. Christ's work is as catholic as human needs. It requires for its execution nothing smaller than a Catholic Church. Or take the matter of Christian education. Surely this is fundamental if anything is. Our divisions have made it impracticable. They have separated into two the things that are one, viz., religion and education. Education has been as completely secularized as if man had no soul and the world had no God. Religion has been as completely isolated as if character had no place in a child's education. Our education is losing its religious values. Christian ideals and principles cannot be woven into the warp and woof of the lives of our own children as a part of their schooling, simply because of the divisions in the Church. To my mind, there are three great problems to be worked out amongst Christian people in the interest of a permanent Christianity. They are Christian education, Christian social righteousness, and Christian unity. I believe the first two await the third."

The tendency of the age is towards corporate unity. America, Italy and Germany have welded principalities

and states into mighty nations. The people of the United States counted national oneness so necessary that they fought a bloody war to maintain it. Business men have organized themselves into great corporations, and although public opinion is dealing sternly with those which misuse their power, the purpose is regulation not disintegration. The corporation is indispensable in the conditions of modern life. Working men have formed themselves into labour unions. Literary, scientific, geographical, historical societies are numerous. The last Annual published by L'Union des Associations Internationales of Brussels gives a directory of four hundred international organizations. Everywhere, formerly disconnected elements are uniting. Even theatre managers and liquor dealers have formed compact national organizations to attain their special ends and unitedly fight restrictive legislation. How can a disorganized Church successfully cope with organized selfish interests? "Team work is the characteristic of the modern world. Religion cannot fail to feel the new impulse and respond. Suppose the world comes together in all things save in religion? Such a prospect we dare not face. If we do not yield to the spirit of unity, it will pass around us or over us and flow through other channels, as a thwarted river cuts a new outlet to the sea."

While working for the large unions that we so much desire, we should beware of divisive unions, by which I mean movements which secure local unity in ways that precipitate schism elsewhere, splitting into still smaller pieces in one country parts that have been long joined in another. When missionaries of various communions in a given region form an organic union on principles

which rend their home churches, what is gained? The Bishop of Oxford declared at Cambridge "that the Anglican Communion would certainly be rent in twain on the day on which any non-episcopally ordained minister was formally allowed within our Communion to celebrate the Eucharist; and any colonial church of our Communion which recognized in this way the validity of non-episcopal orders would either be disowned by other parts of the Anglican Communion, or, if that were not the case, would cause what I have just described as the division within our own Communion at home." A non-Anglican reads such a statement with deep regret; but it represents an attitude which must be reckoned with in considering organic union. Clergymen in some communions are in an awkward predicament. They cordially desire to join their brethren of other churches; but they fear that if they go beyond a fixed point they will so alienate an element in their own church as to undo in one direction what they would do in another.

Equally futile is the effort to solve the problem by seceding from existing communions and establishing a so-called union church "whose only creed is the Bible." This plan has been tried repeatedly and has resulted either in starting another denomination where there were too many before, or in establishing a few isolated congregations without affiliations which help them or bring help to other bodies. Every communion claims to be founded on the Bible. It is the interpretation of the Bible which differs; and as a rule those who boast that the Scriptures alone are their creed interpret them quite as rigidly as any of the historic confessional statements.

Nor is unity to be attained by simply disbanding all denominational organizations and resolving the Church into myriads of detached constituent elements. This would be disintegration where there should be synthesis, admission that the people of God have no real bond of union that can express itself in outward form. One might as well argue that party strife and civil war could be prevented by abolishing national civil government and making each local community an independent unit. Political chaos would quickly result from the adoption of such a policy. History abounds with illustrations that peace cannot be secured in this way, that tribal villages are more apt to quarrel than nations. The principle that would deny the right of government to the representatives of forty millions of people would deny it to the representatives of one hundred people. It is therefore destructive of any organization whatever. Separate individual believers without corporate oneness no more form a Church than separate stones form a building. The Church which is "the body of Christ" is not a pile of sand. Organic union will be a visible expression of the true Church. When it comes, it will be by the merging of communions on a basis which conserves all essential truths; not on a basis of elision or decentralization.

An undenominational mission is sometimes adduced as a feasible plan of unity in Christian work. It is composed of missionaries of many Protestant communions who work in harmony and found flourishing congregations. The difficulty of this plan is that it does not provide for any real or permanent union of the whole body of believers. The local units are either left structurally independent of one another, or they

are attached to the communion to which the majority may happen to belong. Moreover, the mission, while undenominational as a society, appeals to Christians of similar convictions on certain points of doctrine regarding which the churches as a whole are not agreed. This gives it, despite its mingling of denominational elements, a solidarity of belief and uniformity that are independent of ecclesiastical lines and virtually form new ones. However great its excellence therefore as a temporary method of proclaiming a special evangel, it is clearly not an illustration of a desirable type of permanent church union, and doubtless its devoted founders and supporters never intended it to be. They were thinking of speedy evangelization, not of church union; and in organizing congregations, they simply did the best they could under conditions as they found them.

The cause of unity will not be advanced by premature or impracticable measures. The deeply rooted differences of centuries are not to be eradicated in a day. We must feel our way along with caution and wisdom. There are some factors which are still beyond control and which time alone can eliminate.

Nor is anything to be gained by undue aggressiveness. It is a singular fact that some men champion national disarmament and the peaceful settlement of international disputes in such a belligerent manner that the hearer instinctively feels like reaching for a club, and that a discussion of temperance in an ecclesiastical body nearly always precipitates the most intemperate discussion of the session. In like manner, there are some advocates of union who are so obstreperous that they prejudice the very cause which they wish to advance.

The spirit of union is the spirit of gentleness and persuasiveness and not of violence. It was not to unbelievers but to Christians that Paul said: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one towards another." [1]

And yet there are limits to the duty of waiting. We cannot acquiesce in being put off forever with the time-worn plea that "the time is not yet ripe for union." It never will be, if some opponents can have their way. Christian spirit does not always require surrender and it may be consistent with very plain speaking. Our Lord Himself occasionally used severe language and St. Paul resisted Cephas "to the face." [2] To acquiesce indefinitely in sectarian divisions, rather than incur the risk of strife with men who insist upon perpetuating them, would be weakness, not meekness. Some men are so pugnacious and stubborn that they will not consent to any plan that is not in accord with their own convictions; like the dour Scotchman, who, when a motion was made in a church meeting that a certain action be made unanimous, rose and said: "I want it understood that there will never be anything unanimous in this church as long as I am a member of it." It is difficult to be patient with such obstructionists. There are times, too, when it is not easy to credit with sincerity the type of clergymen who ardently profess a desire for union and yet oppose every proposal to bring it about, and who even refuse to join in coöperative movements which do not involve ecclesiastical questions at all.

As long as these types are in existence, and doubtless

[1] Eph. iv. 31. [2] Gal. ii. 11.

this will be always, unanimity is not to be expected. It is a serious question, therefore, how long a needed reform should be postponed after it becomes evident that a large majority are ready to act and that delay is doing great harm to the cause. If there was ever a union that was imperatively required by every consideration of Christian statesmanship and common sense, it was the amalgamation of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland; and yet a clannish handful of "Wee Frees" fought it with a vehemence and persistence worthy of a better cause. It is a naval axiom that the speed of a squadron is no faster than that of its slowest unit. But there is a difference between an officer who cannot keep up and one who will not, and a time may come when it is better to abandon a discontented laggard than to jeopardize the object for which the squadron exists.

After long and acrimonious debates as to how specie payments could be resumed in America, the Hon. John Sherman brought the controversy to a sudden end by the sensible dictum: "The way to resume is to resume." Whereupon Congress stopped talking and passed the needed bill. There are some communions to-day that are ready for the same kind of action. They have discussed union for decades and they can go on discussing it forever. The time has now come for them to do what they have been professing themselves to be anxious to do.

On the providential side, can we deny that "all things are now ready." Taking the most favourable view of past reasons for separation, we may say to-day with even greater emphasis what Dr. A. A. Hodge said shortly before his lamented death: "Certainly God

appears to be preparing to make the ultimate unity of the Church the richest and most comprehensive of created forms in the number and variety of its profound harmonies. It would have been a very simple thing at the first to form a homogeneous society out of the undifferentiated family of Adam numerically multiplied. But for thousands of years God has been breaking up that family into a multitude of varieties passing all enumeration. In arctic, torrid and temperate zones; on mountains, valleys, coasts, continents and islands; in endlessly drawn out successions of ages; under the influence of every possible variety of inherited institution; in every stage of civilization and under every political, social and religious constitution; through all possible complications of personal idiosyncrasy and of external environment, God has been drawing human nature through modifications. All these varieties enter into and contribute to the marvellous riches of the Christian Church, for her members are 'redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' And all these are further combined into all the endless varieties of ecclesiastical organizations, monarchical, aristocratical, republican and democratic, which the ingenuity of man, assisted by all complications of theological controversy and of social and political life, has been able to invent. . . . A time can never come when many of these differences so evidently designated will be obliterated. But undoubtedly a time is soon coming when the law of differentiation, so long dominant, shall be subordinated to the law of integration, when all these differences so arduously won shall be wrought into the harmony of the perfect whole." [1]

[1] "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," pp. 307, 308.

XVII

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

MUCH writing about the unity of the Church is vague because the writer fails to make clear what he means by the Church. I do not refer to the use of the term for an edifice, a congregation, a denomination, or a Sunday service. This is common, but the context prevents confusion. But what do we mean by the Church in the larger sense? If one regards it as a mechanical organization, or a loose aggregation of units, or a body inseparable from an order or a sacrament, his idea of unity will be influenced by his definition. We believe that the Church is composed of all persons who live in vital relationship with Christ, whatever their age or land or form of organization, and that it "is the organism of which Christ is the life, the outward form of which He is the inward and formative principle. This is indeed the divine side of the Church, but then the divine side is the real side. And this is the real basis, and so gives us the true formative, organic idea of the Christian Church."[1]

The distinction between the visible Church and the invisible Church has been pressed too far. "There are not two churches, the one visible and the other invisible. There is but one single, indivisible Church of Jesus Christ, and that Church is visible or invisible just according to the point of view taken. . . . Since this

[1] Henry B. Smith, "System of Christian Theology," pp. 590–591; cf. Isaiah xliii. 1–7; xlix. 15; John xv. 5; Eph. i. 23, and v. 25–29.

one Church comprehends all the centuries and members in all the communities embraced in the whole course of human history, a part being glorified in heaven while a part is struggling with the conditions of this life, it follows that this Church is too vast to be comprehended in its unity in one human vision. As a whole, it is invisible because its proportions transcend vision. I take the true distinction to be, the Church as we see it and the Church as God sees it. . . . What is called the invisible Church is the most conspicuous object in the universe. The invisible Church is the only Church that exists. We see parts of it; it becomes visible to us in sections, in partial glimpses; but yet it is the same Church." [1]

Some writers apparently assume that it makes little difference how the Church manifests itself externally to the world or whether a believer publicly identifies himself with it, since the true Church is invisible. This assumption involves a confusion of thought. Because we cannot see the entire Church, it does not follow that we should be indifferent as to whether the part which we do see misrepresents the whole. If the Church on earth at any given time is to be what God intended it to be, and is to do what God appointed it to do, the visible part of it should harmonize with the invisible. That the harmony is not now complete must be sorrowfully conceded. Church officers, like other men, are not infallible judges of motives, nor do they claim to hold the keys of heaven and hell. They must admit into their churches persons who make a credible confession of faith and mistakes are undoubtedly made. Every

[1] A. A. Hodge, "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," pp. 204 sq. and 299 sq.

denomination carries on its rolls some members whom the eye of God must see to be not of the body of Christ. Our Lord Himself told His disciples that the tares cannot always be separated from the wheat in the world. We must remember, too, the Christians outside of the churches. There are undoubtedly earnest souls who are so situated that it is difficult for them to identify themselves with any external organization. No true churchman will deny to such followers of our Lord a membership in the body of Christ which unites them in spirit with believers of every age and country and with the great cloud of witnesses who now "see the King in His beauty." The true Church therefore cannot be exactly computed by adding together the reported members of all the denominations.

This reservation, however, is not fairly applicable to persons who, within easy reach of churches, refuse to join them. It is not a valid excuse to say that they object to a creed or organization or form of worship, for practically all evangelical churches now give wide latitude of belief within essential Christian lines. If one really loves God with all his heart and honestly desires to serve Him, the normal expectation is that he will associate himself with others who have the same faith and desire, and if he fails to do so, the sincerity of his position is fairly open to question. One need not go so far as Josiah Royce when he declares that "those are right who affirm that the Church and not the person of its Founder is the central idea of Christianity," and that "the first Christian idea is that the salvation of man is determined by some sort of membership in a certain spiritual community."[1] On the other hand, the re-

[1] "The Problem of Christianity."

action from such a position should not carry one to the other extreme that, if one is loyal to Christ, it matters little whether he is in the Church or not. Such a distinction between Christ and the Church is fictitious. The Scriptural conception is "the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." [1] "It belongs," says Dr. Hodge, "to the essential nature of this spiritual Church, as composed of intrinsically social beings who by reason of their saintship are loyal servants of their Master in a hostile world, that it always and everywhere tends to express itself in some external organized form and so render itself more definitely visible."

Men puzzle themselves unnecessarily in trying to explain why some people do not attend church. A clergyman's explanation might not be deemed impartial. The New York *Sun* will not be accused of partiality, and it editorially declares: "The reason does not lie in the quality of the preaching. Intellectually, sermons at this time are probably of a higher order than at earlier periods. Take the period of the so-called Great Awakening of 1857, when every Protestant church was crowded to the doors and theatres had to be called into requisition to make room for the throngs eager to listen to religious exhortation and anxious concerning the salvation of their souls. Generally, the preaching was of a low order intellectually. If it was eloquent, the eloquence was merely in its earnest conviction. At a time like this it would be regarded as rhapsody, as a sentimental outburst which defeated itself by its extravagance of emotion." The editor concludes that if some men do not go to church to-day,

[1] Eph. i. 23.

it is for the same reason that some did not go in former days—"simply because they don't believe in the necessity for going. They are not interested in the church because they are not interested in religion. They have not the deep and vital religious faith of which church worship is the outward expression. They may think they believe, but actually they do not believe in the religion they profess."

It has become the fashion in some quarters to speak disparagingly of the Church. The world has always done so. The sceptical, the irreligious, the disappointed schemers for social or professional advancement through church relationships, the men who are casting about for an excuse to play golf on Sunday, naturally make artificial objections to the Church into fig leaves to cover the shame of their neglect. Those who violate the laws of God are, of course, bitter against an institution which opposes them. Saloon keepers, tradesmen who wish to keep their stores open on Sunday, the fast society set which turns it into a day for dinner or card parties, the writers who, under the veneer of intellectual culture, are pagans at heart—all these do not now see and never have seen any good in the Church. "How did you enjoy the service last Sunday?" a man asked a non-churchgoing friend whom he had persuaded to attend church. "For the life of me I couldn't see what brought so many people together," was the reply. "I got nothing worth going for." In other words, he put the Church on a level with the theatre or lecture hall and judged it by the entertainment that it afforded him. The idea of worshipping God never entered his mind. His soul was atrophied. Of course he saw nothing worth going for. If one's object in

attending church is merely to get something out of it for himself, he is likely to be disappointed unless he had first put something into the church. Men cannot draw dividends unless they have made an investment. Those who put the most into the Church get the most out of it; who think not what they can secure for themselves, but what they can do for others.

Unfortunately, criticisms of the Church are not confined to people of this type. Some discouraged members and even clergymen have taken up the hue and cry. They walk about Zion and tell the defects thereof and publish them in the newspapers. Sensational preachers advertise topics which suggest a reflection upon the Church, such as: "Why is the Church almost wholly made up of women and children?" "What is the matter with the Church?" "Is Christianity on the decline?" Even if it were true that "the Church is made up almost wholly of women and children," it would be highly to their credit and altogether to the discredit of men. But it is not true. My work for many years has taken me into pulpits in all parts of the country, and I can testify from personal knowledge that men are in the Church and in increasing numbers as compared with twenty years ago. "What is the matter with the Church?" Sensational preachers for one thing. "Is Christianity on the decline?" Pessimists mournfully allege that it is. But what former generation of Christians could have produced the Woman's Missionary Movement, the Student Volunteer Movement, the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Missionary Education Movement, the Men and Religion Movement, the innumerable efforts to apply the Gospel of Christ to the problems of society and busi-

ness, and a foreign missionary enterprise which to-day represents an expenditure of over thirty million dollars annually and the magnificent expansive power of a Gospel which is now generally recognized as a world conquering force? The Christian activities of our day would not be possible in an era of decadent faith, but only in one of splendid vitality and power. Abundant facts support the view that the Church is growing in grace as well as in knowledge, and that while the age of special inspiration and miraculous manifestations is behind us, the Golden Age of Christ's Kingdom on earth is before us.

I would not excuse the defects of ecclesiastical bodies, all of which sometimes fail to represent accurately the true Church of God. The sin of schism in particular has been often referred to in this book. As compared with what they ought to be, churches are not perfect; neither is any organization on earth. One of the historic creeds declares that "particular churches are more or less pure according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught" and that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to heresy and error." No organization that is composed of human beings can be wholly free from the imperfections of human beings. It is fair to insist that church members should exemplify a higher type of character and conduct, and they do; but the Church on earth is a school for the development of character, not a haven for perfected saints.

Some revivalists sin grievously in their treatment of the Church. Godly pastors and laymen who yearn for the salvation of their fellow men invite an evangelist to conduct a series of special meetings. They raise a large sum of money to pay expenses and to remunerate

him on a lavish scale. They toil early and late in making preparations. They pray earnestly and without ceasing for him and the services which he is to conduct. They close their own churches, and make every sacrifice that they can think of in order to give him a clear right of way. Then he stands before the audiences which they have gathered for him and vehemently lampoons and denounces the very institution and its leaders that made his coming possible. Such revivalists no doubt galvanize into action some sluggish Christians and startle some hardened sinners into serious thought; but it is a question whether their methods do not in the long run cheapen the Church and weaken the force of its message. To pillory ministers as ineffective preachers without a gospel and church members as hypocrites and "dead ones" may give gleeful comfort to people outside of the Church, but it is not likely to increase their respect for it.

A clergyman makes a grave mistake when he appeals to the popular desire for entertainment. The Church does not exist to amuse people. The theatre is maintained for that purpose and can easily outbid the Church as a purveyor of pleasure. The attempt to pull people away from a play or a moving picture show by providing a better one in the Church is of doubtful wisdom. The Anglican Communion sets a good example in this respect to all other communions. Whatever it may countenance in its parish house, the church edifice itself is never used for secular purposes but is reserved exclusively for the worship of God.

Advertisements of religious services are often worded in such a way as to cheapen the Church in the estimation of the public. One who has a lofty conception of

the Church and its mission to men reads with regret some of the notices in the Saturday editions of metropolitan newspapers. Emphasis is laid upon the music, and the titles and authors of solos and anthems are given as if the services were concerts. Even the announcement of sermon themes frequently leads to abuse. If a clergyman's ordinary subjects are what they ought to be, they will seldom draw non-churchgoers. The effort to attract people by telling them that they will hear a discussion of a particular topic tempts the minister to select sensational themes, such as "Top-Nots," from the text in Matthew xxiv. 17: "Let him which is on the house-top not come down"; "Automobiles in the Bible," from Ezekiel i. 19: "The wheels went by"; and "Sanctified Baseball," from Isaiah xxii. 18: "He will toss thee like a ball." Such topics make the judicious grieve and bring into contempt the minister who resorts to them. Church service is for the worship of God, for prayer, for the preaching of the mighty themes of time and eternity. The Church must win on spiritual issues or utterly fail. It should stand in the community for the noblest things, for the reality of the unseen. Amid buildings devoted to business and pleasure, the Church witnesses for God. Who can estimate the eloquently silent testimony of the English cathedrals, or of Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street in New York? Even irreligious men will reverence a church which is true to its divine mission and will be far more likely to attend its services than a church which appeals to other and lower motives.

Fortunately, a large majority of the clergy are intent upon their true mission. There are exceptions. But are there not shyster lawyers, quack doctors, yellow

journalists, unscrupulous merchants, demagogic politicians, and men in every business and profession who steal the livery of heaven to serve the devil in? In a calling like the ministry, some men of this kind are to be expected, for the pulpit is an attractive place for one who craves notoriety. But the proportion of such types is smaller than in other callings.

A common remark is that ministers are behind the times and do not know life. But they are educated in the same colleges as other educated men. They read the same books and periodicals and more of them, and their work brings them into contact with all social classes. No other men in the community touch human life at a greater variety of points. Weddings and funerals, the rich and the poor, the sick and the well, the anxious and the sorrowing, all come within the ordinary labour of the average clergyman.

The deterioration of the clergy of which so much is said is apparent only. A few generations ago, the ministry as a profession had greater power and prestige because the minister was one of the two or three educated men in the community. While in theory the Church had divorced itself from the State, in fact the inheritance of church supremacy retained such momentum that the clergyman had almost as much power as a Roman Catholic bishop. The ministry in such circumstances naturally had a strong attraction for men who coveted the secular leadership and social status which the minister enjoyed to a greater extent than other men. To-day, education is more generally diffused. The clergyman preaches to a congregation many of whose members are as well educated as himself. Other professions offer richer rewards. The result is that

there is smaller worldly temptation to enter the ministry than formerly. But, as a rule, those who do go into the ministry to-day are influenced by pure motives and their average is considerably higher than the average of the ministry of former generations. The increasing difficulty in preaching to the entire satisfaction of congregations is not due to deterioration in the quality of preaching, but, in large part at least, to changed conditions. In the New England village in which I was born there was hardly anything to do Sundays and evenings except to go to church, and the church was not only the religious but the social, literary and intellectual centre of the community life. People do not need to go to church now for all of these reasons. There are more ways of becoming acquainted and of securing intellectual stimulus outside. Moreover, the restlessness and nervous excitability of the modern man make it harder for him to listen quietly to a sermon. The Rev. Dr. David Swing, of Chicago, could not be accused of pique, for he had great congregations; but he declared that the difficulty with modern sermons was not so much in the pulpit as it was in the pew, many of whose occupants were mentally incapable of concentrating their thought for a half hour's discussion of a serious subject.

A somewhat extensive acquaintance among clergymen leads me to say that the average minister is an intelligent, studious, hard-working, consecrated man of God. He is doing much for Christ and his fellow men. He would gladly do more if he could; and it is largely because he sees that the present divided condition of Christendom is hampering his ability to do more that he is becoming an earnest advocate of union. It is

easy to say that many clergymen are not working on the highest plane of efficiency, that some of them have not the wisdom or the ability to do so, and that others do not have the requisite equipment. Is not this true of every class of men, even in the most highly developed professions? There is no body of men in the world—army and navy officers, government officials, lawyers, physicians, engineers, business men, all or even the majority of whom are characterized by clearness of vision, breadth of mind, soundness of judgment, and such resolution of purpose and excellence of method as to enable them to use ability and opportunity to the best advantage. To criticize the ministerial body because it falls short of ideal standards is a mere counsel of perfection. It is hardly fair to depreciate clergymen because they have those limitations of human nature which we all possess. Jesus presumably selected for the apostleship the best qualified men who were available, and He trained them Himself; but even among them, only three or four rose to the standard which some well-meaning critics are demanding of modern ministers. The majority proved to be rather commonplace men and one to be a thief and a traitor. "God must love common people," said Abraham Lincoln, "for He made so many of them." At any rate, some of the most faithful ministerial work has been done by men of ordinary gifts, and the Lord of the harvest has blessed it in very marked ways.

There has been much talk about Winston Churchill's novel, "The Inside of the Cup." The book presents considerable truth, but in a misleading way. By concentrating all industrial and financial evils among a hundred millions of people into one congregation, and

all the fidelity to God and Christlike sympathy for the unfortunate into one clergyman, and by mixing in some bad and wholly irrelevant theology, the author raises an unjustifiable presumption against the average church. It is lamentably true that there are business men as ruthless as Eldon Parr and that a few of them are members of churches. In some exceptional places men of that type may dominate the congregations to which they belong. But it is grossly untrue that such conditions are typical. I do not believe that there is anywhere in America such a church as Churchill describes. As a rule, when a minister preaches social and industrial justice without regard to persons, when he tries to apply the Gospel of Jesus to present day conditions, the leading laymen of his congregation rally around him and, instead of opposing him, they provide the money to carry out his plans and perhaps raise his salary. A minister who turns his pulpit into a ring to ride a hobby on some pet social or political theory, or who takes advantage of his position to become an agitator of false teaching, may properly be criticized, and, if no other course will avail, may even be put out of the Church. But he should not maintain that he is a martyr to the truth because he confuses his idiosyncrasies with a desire to help his fellow men.

It is often alleged that the Church of to-day is using antiquated methods, that science, philosophy and business are utilizing new ideas, but that the Church clings to the old ones. Two observations may be made here:

First: The Church has made enormous advances in religious thought, the interpretation of the Bible, the understanding of God and His relations to men, and the effective application of the Gospel to human life—

an advance which is quite as great as that made in other departments of knowledge and activity. It is true that there are some belated individuals in all communions who are living in a past age; but the average communion to-day is making an earnest effort to keep abreast of the best thought and methods of the modern era.

Second: There is a limitation to the extent to which new methods can be wisely used in an institution like the Church. New machinery and new scientific discoveries do not imply the need of a new religion. Human nature is the same to-day as it was thousands of years ago. The sins of modern society were the sins of Nineveh and Rome. Some one has pictured a Babylonian noble rising from the dead and visiting a modern city. He asks to be shown the sights. He is ushered into a gorgeous banqueting hall where men and women are feasting and drinking until they have to be carried to their carriages. He is led through the slums where the wretched poor make themselves sodden with liquor. He is shown gambling halls where men with drawn faces are hazarding their money. He is driven to a race-course where raucous throngs bet on the steaming horses. He is taken to a public hall where scantily clad women dance with men of dissolute lives. He is seated in a theatre where the play depicts lust and sneers at virtue. But the Babylonian turns wearily, disgustedly away, exclaiming: "These things are not new. We had them all in Babylon twenty-five centuries ago. Because we had them, Babylon was destroyed as unfit to live. Has the world learned nothing from the experience of ages? Is it to continue forever the follies of antiquity?"

Temptation, anxiety, illness, sorrow have been unchanged by time. The heart of the twentieth century dweller on Fifth Avenue, New York, cries out for God in essentially the same way as the heart of a Judean shepherd four thousand years ago. The religious nature of man has not been altered. Emphasis, indeed, has been changed to some extent. Some truths which powerfully appealed to our fathers do not so powerfully appeal to us, and some motives of which they were but vaguely conscious have become influential. But the Rock of Ages still stands. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The Eternal God is still our "refuge" and underneath are the same "everlasting arms." The preacher now, like the preacher in Thessalonica and Corinth, must appeal to weary, heart-broken, sin-burdened men and women, and his fundamental message must be that which Christ and the Apostle Paul proclaimed in the first century. Any advance that it is possible to make over present preaching will not take us farther away from the preaching of Christ and St. Paul but will bring us nearer to it.

As far as new methods are properly applicable, the Church has shown a ready disposition to adopt them. Sunday-schools, women's missionary societies, young people's societies, boys' brigades, city missions, institutional churches, brotherhoods, orphanages, hospitals, and kindred efforts are all comparatively new and show the willingness of the Church to adopt the methods that are called for by modern conditions. The form of appeal, too, has been freely adapted to the modern man. Let any one compare the sermons of Jeremy Taylor and Jonathan Edwards with the sermons of

Phillips Brooks and John Henry Jowett and he will note the wide difference in statement.

Protestant Churches are often charged with moving away from down-town sections of cities to the up-town avenues, and the Roman Catholic Churches are praised for staying among the multitudes. This is misleading. Roman Catholics, like Protestants, build their churches where their people live. The down-town tenement districts of large cities are largely Roman Catholic. Of course, therefore, the Roman Catholic Churches are there. The up-town residence districts are predominantly Protestant, and their members naturally build churches where their families can attend them. That Protestants do not neglect down-town neighbourhoods is abundantly evident to any one who visits the numerous missions which are supported by the up-town churches and which draw their workers from them. It is unreasonable to object that "Protestants build churches for the rich and missions for the poor." When wealthy people wish to give the blessings of the Gospel to the poor who live several miles away and therefore cannot attend the up-town church, what better thing can they do than build a church where the poor people are, put a minister in charge of it, and send their best laymen and young people to teach the Sunday-school classes, visit the sick, and help care-laden men and women to bear the burden of life?

A fallacy of certain reformers is that the Church could soon put an end to intemperance and other social evils if it chose to do so. This assumption rests upon a false definition of the Church. A church which, at its pleasure, could marshall its members to the polls to vote as it directs on a given issue would be character-

ized by rigidity of organization, obedience to leadership, and submission to discipline. There is no such church. Yes, there is one—the Mormon. Its solid and docile membership will do just what its leaders order. The only other church which approaches such discipline is the Roman Catholic. Is any one prepared to say that either the Mormon or the Roman Catholic Church is a more effective influence for reform, a greater force for morality and temperance, than Protestant Churches? Our churches are composed of free, intelligent men and women who do their own thinking and who, while heartily desirous of having the will of God done in the world, are not agreed as to the political measures that are desirable to give effect to it. Many of them do not believe that legislatures are the places to begin moral reforms. They regard a law as the expression of a public sentiment which has been created quite outside of legislative chambers, and they are convinced that the Church does its best work when it is creating that sentiment in the community, and not when it is besieging the anterooms of politicians.

There is a kind of modern novel whose chief characteristic is the tormenting of the hero and heroine. A handsome, brave and chivalrous youth falls desperately in love with a girl of radiant beauty—liquid eyes, golden hair, peach-bloom complexion and graceful figure. Then the author proceeds to get after the pair with a literary pitchfork. He chases them all over creation, puts all kinds of obstacles in their path, introduces a heavy villain to abduct the girl, pours upon the unlucky heads of the hero and heroine every conceivable calamity, until, after he has harried them nearly to death and exhausted the resources of his ingenuity

and vocabulary, he manages to kill off the villain and to marry the sorely beset lovers. Some men write about the Church after the same fashion. Undoubtedly, churches ought to be better than they are; but they are not likely to be improved by ministers who sensationally arraign them in the hope of drawing an audience. "It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest," runs a Scotch proverb. Some defects and abuses can and should be corrected, as we have tried to show. Others are so deeply rooted in human nature or are so inextricably intertwined with political or economic conditions that they cannot be so easily remedied out of hand as some critics innocently imagine. Some would-be reformers, too, promulgate such visionary notions or advocate excellent ones in such violent ways that they retard the cause which they seek to advance. A good cause can suffer no greater misfortune than an advocacy so unwise and impracticable as to dishearten its friends, alienate support that it could otherwise obtain, prejudice it in the public mind, and gratify and reinforce its enemies by leading multitudes to say: "If that is religion, we will have none of it." If all Christians do not rally around a man who proclaims himself an apostle of a new reform, it may be because they shrewdly suspect that their self-chosen leader is not entirely worthy of their confidence.

In spite of many difficulties, the Church is manifesting greater virility and aggressive power than in all its history. It studies the Bible more earnestly and intelligently. It gives on a far more liberal scale for the support of philanthropic, educational and missionary work. It has developed a public conscience which is more keenly sensitive to wrong. The recent outbursts

against business frauds, political corruption and the white slave traffic do not mean that these evils are new. As a matter of fact, they are very old. What is new is a public conscience that will not condone the evils to which men were indifferent a few decades ago. The philanthropic work, which is one of the glories of our age, could not live without the Church, for while it receives material assistance from some individuals who do not profess to be Christians, it has been estimated that it receives no less than eighty-six per cent. of its financial support and ninety per cent. of its workers from communicants of evangelical churches.

I sympathize with those who have a high ideal of the Church and deprecate methods that are inconsistent with its dignity and sacredness as a divine institution. The Bible writers refer to the Church with deepest reverence. It was the centre of their lives. Its service was their highest joy, its triumph a glorious consummation. "The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," Paul called it.[1] This means that the Church is a divine institution. It is not the Church of man but the Church of God. True, it is composed of human beings, but when they have been regenerated and are banded together with sincerity of heart in the ways that God has appointed, they constitute the Church. Christ identifies Himself with this Church. "He is the head of the body, the Church," Paul told the Colossians.[2] He wrote to the Ephesians: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 15. [2] Col. i. 18.

or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."[1] He exhorted the elders of the Church at Ephesus "to feed the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood."[2]

The Church is the chief channel through which God manifests Himself to the world. There are other channels, but none so wide and deep as this. It is in the Church that the followers of God congregate, in the Church that His Word is studied, His Gospel preached and the knowledge of His will sought. It is through the lives and efforts of the ministry and laity of the Church that He communicates His love and power to men. The noble imagery of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah fittingly describes the true glory of the Church: "the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

[1] Eph. v. 25–27. [2] Acts xx. 28.

XVIII

THE COMING CONSUMMATION

MANY modern Christian movements, whose necessity is generally conceded, are not specifically authorized in Holy Scripture. The anti-slavery movement, the temperance movement, Sunday-schools, Women's Societies, Boards of Missions, Young Men's Christian Associations, and a dozen other religious enterprises which are making the Gospel of Christ real in human life and extending it throughout the world, are not mentioned in the Word of God. In respect of these things our Lord was content to enunciate the principles, to inculcate the spirit, whose normal development would in time lead His disciples to combat certain evils and to promote certain applications of His teachings. No reasonable person questions that these efforts are in accord with the mind of Christ. A few subjects, however, lay with such special heaviness upon His heart, and perhaps He was so particularly anxious that there should be no possibility of misinterpreting His will regarding them, that He specifically designated them. The preaching of His Gospel throughout the world was one of these, and the oneness of His followers was another. Surely, therefore, we should attach unusual sanctity to missions and union and confidently expect Him to bless every wise effort of His disciples to carry out His plainly indicated desires.

The words of Christ appear to warrant the conclusion that He considered union an indispensable condition to the evangelization of the world. In John x. 16

we read: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and *they shall hear my voice and they shall become one flock*, one shepherd." Does not this suggest that when they shall hear His voice, that is as one result of hearing it, His followers "shall become one flock"? This may not be a necessary inference, but it is certainly a possible one. John xiii. 34–35 more definitely looks in the same direction. "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; . . . *by this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." Here Christ explicitly declares that all men shall know that we are His disciples if we love one another. The emphasis becomes still stronger in John xvii. 21: "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us; *that the world may believe that thou didst send me.*" What could be plainer than this statement? He prays "that they may all be one" in order that the world may believe that He was sent from God. One thinks of the majestic declaration of the sixty-seventh Psalm: "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us; *that*," in order that, "thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."

It may be said that these passages do not necessarily call for organic union to the exclusion of every other form of unity; but they certainly call for something more than the present divided state of the Church. It is difficult to square them with most of the objections to union. It requires some ingenuity to prove that such expressions as "one flock," "one shepherd," "love one another," "one even as thou Father art in me and I in thee," and others that might be cited, naturally sug-

gest anything short of union. At any rate, "there is one thing certain about it," said Dr. Archibald A. Hodge. "The Church has a great many attributes, but that which is absolutely essential is its absolute unity. There is no doubt if there be but one God, there is but one Church; if there be but one Christ, there is but one Church; if there be but one cross, there is but one Church; if there be but one Holy Ghost, there is but one Church." [1]

Experience as well as Scripture emphasizes the causal relation between union and missions. The task of evangelizing the world is so enormous, it must be conducted in so many different and widely separated lands, it requires such vast resources, and is confronted by such stupendous obstacles, that there is no likelihood whatever that it will be achieved, unless the people of God combine more harmoniously and effectively than they are combining now. A sundered Church, battling against the united forces of evil, is fighting at a fearful disadvantage. If God shall give the victory in such circumstances, it will not be because He approves our divisions, but because the salvation of the world is too precious in His sight to be indefinitely delayed by the failure of man to discern the signs of the times.

If we cannot now see a practicable method of attaining church union, we can at least try to obtain a larger and more comprehensive view of Christ. A fuller knowledge of Him will give us a better understanding of all His followers. He is not a sectarian Christ. He towers far above the arena of theological strife and ecclesiastical clangour. He said that if He were to "be lifted up," He would "draw all men" unto Himself.[2]

[1] "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," p. 204.

[2] John xii. 32.

Then the closer we come to Him, the closer we shall find ourselves to one another. "We are labourers together with God," said Paul; then surely we should be labourers together with one another. "He is to be called," wrote the unknown author of the "Theologia Germanica" in the fourteenth century, "and is truly a partaker of the divine nature who is illuminated with the divine light and inflamed with eternal love; and light and knowledge are worth nothing without love."

In the white light of the nearer Christ, some of the obstacles to union that now appear to be so formidable may look considerably smaller. Mr. Nolan R. Best reminds us that the world weighs 6,500,000,000,000,000,000,000 tons; but that we would not quarrel with anybody who insisted that this figure was wrong by several millions of tons. We would say: "A small discrepancy like that amounts to nothing." "If we found out, though, that our grocer was weighing fifteen ounces of butter and calling it a pound, there would be trouble over that missing ounce. How much difference it takes to make a difference depends altogether on the size of the things we are interested in. The bigger the interest, the less difference even a big difference makes. To be sorely troubled by matters of petty dimensions means simply that men have been weighing religion in scales of petty size. With bigger scales, their worries would be smaller. If a Christian has never thought outside his own peculiar church, then every item of that church's practice and theology will count with him as essentials, every least detail worth fighting for. But if he has looked out far enough to see Christianity encompassing the faith and hope, the contrition and the

aspiration of millions of hearts who perhaps never heard of his denomination, the vision takes on a vastness that dwarfs himself and his special kind. Once a Christian gets that broad and far sight, the only things in the religion of Jesus which still look big and consequential are the elements of it comprehensive enough to include those millions. Any little wavering segment line can cut one group or another off from the rest; but it takes a circumference like the orbit of a star to sweep the whole host into one. And the eye that has traced that mighty circumference has trouble afterwards in seeing the diminutive dividing lines. That arch of the sky, under which big facts so naturally take command over little, men never appreciate till they look aloft. Isaiah in his visions was granted sight of God spanning the sky with His hand, comprehending the dust of the earth in a measure and weighing the mountains in scales. Then the prophet understood that 'the nations are as a drop in a bucket and are accounted as the small dust of the balance.' Even so, if we Christians can but have a little sight of the greatness of God, our theologies, our polities, our distinctions of name and custom would be with us also 'accounted as the small dust of the balance.'"[1]

"In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South nor North,
But one great fellowship of Love,
Throughout the whole wide earth.
In Him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord,
Close binding all mankind."

[1] Editorial in *The Continent*, May 28, 1914.

The union of the people of God is coming. There can be no doubt about it. Too many earnest souls are praying for it, providential indications too definitely point towards it, the words and the mind of our Lord are too unmistakable to permit any other conclusion. Union may not come in our time; but come it will, sooner or later. A united Church of the Living God! There are hours when the vision of it rises before one with such beauty and majesty that the reverent words of the Psalmist spontaneously come: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God!" "What trials and delays must be endured, what obstacles and difficulties overcome, what long and perilous journey accomplished, before the vision is realized, God only knows. It may be that the conflict with evil must grow sharper and more bitter, before Christians learn that division means defeat. It may be that the shame of forsaken temples and a vanishing Sabbath and a system of education without religion must grow deeper, to make men see the fatal consequences of disunion, rivalry and mutual mistrust among the disciples of Christ. It may be that disaster and humiliation and weakness must befall the Christian forces and they must be driven to some dreadful battle-field of Armageddon to make them stand together against the united powers of darkness and unbelief. Or it may be, and God grant it, that the lesson will be learned in brighter paths and slowly spelled in syllables of hope. But whether by bright ways or by dark ways, whether through suffering or through rejoicing, God lead us towards the consummation of Christian unity in church union, God keep us obedient to the heavenly vision."[1]

[1] Henry van Dyke, Article in *The Continent*, December 5, 1912.

In the gray dawn of morning, I toiled up that majestic pile of perpetual snow in the Cascade Range known as Mount Hood, and crossed dry-shod on my upward way the bed of a stream in which there were but trickling rivulets of water and occasional shallow pools. But when I returned towards evening, I found the dry bed of the morning filled to the banks with rushing water. What had made the change? The sun had risen, and his warm and genial rays had softened the icy snow and sent floods of water to submerge the great boulders and to pour down their life-giving refreshment upon the dusty plains below. In like manner, we are now making our toilsome way along the obstacle strewn path to unity, and, like the Hebrews of old, our souls are sometimes "much discouraged because of the way."[1] But unto those that fear His name "shall the Sun of Righteousness arise"[2] and "when He goeth forth in His might,"[3] "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."[4] "The God of Israel . . . will open rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys."[5] "And the glowing sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water."[6]

How earnestly do we desire the reunion of the scattered fragments of the Church of God? Have we faith to believe that it will come? Are we praying, as a conference of missionaries in Tokyo in 1900 asked the Christians of all communions in Japan to pray: "Look now, we beseech Thee, upon Thy Church and take from it division and strife and whatsoever hinders godly union and concord. Fill us with Thy love and

[1] Num. xxi. 4. [2] Malachi iv. 2. [3] Judges v. 31.
[4] Psalm xix. 6. [5] Isaiah xli. 18. [6] Isaiah xxxv. 7.

guide us by Thy Spirit, that we may attain to that oneness for which Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, prayed."

Well may we make our own the sublime petition of St. Paul: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever. Amen."[1]

[1] Eph. iii. 14–21.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEACE AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH

"O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

"O God of Peace, Who through Thy Son Jesus Christ didst set forth One Faith for the salvation of mankind; Send Thy grace and heavenly blessing upon all Christian people who are striving to draw nearer to Thee, and to each other, in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace. Give us penitence for our divisions, wisdom to know Thy truth, courage to do Thy will, love which shall break down the barriers of pride and prejudice, and an unswerving loyalty to Thy Holy Name. Suffer us not to shrink from any endeavour, which is in accordance with Thy will, for the peace and unity of Thy Church. Give us boldness to seek only Thy glory and the advancement of Thy Kingdom. Unite us all in Thee as Thou, O Father, with Thy Son and the Holy Spirit, art One God, world without end. Amen."

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